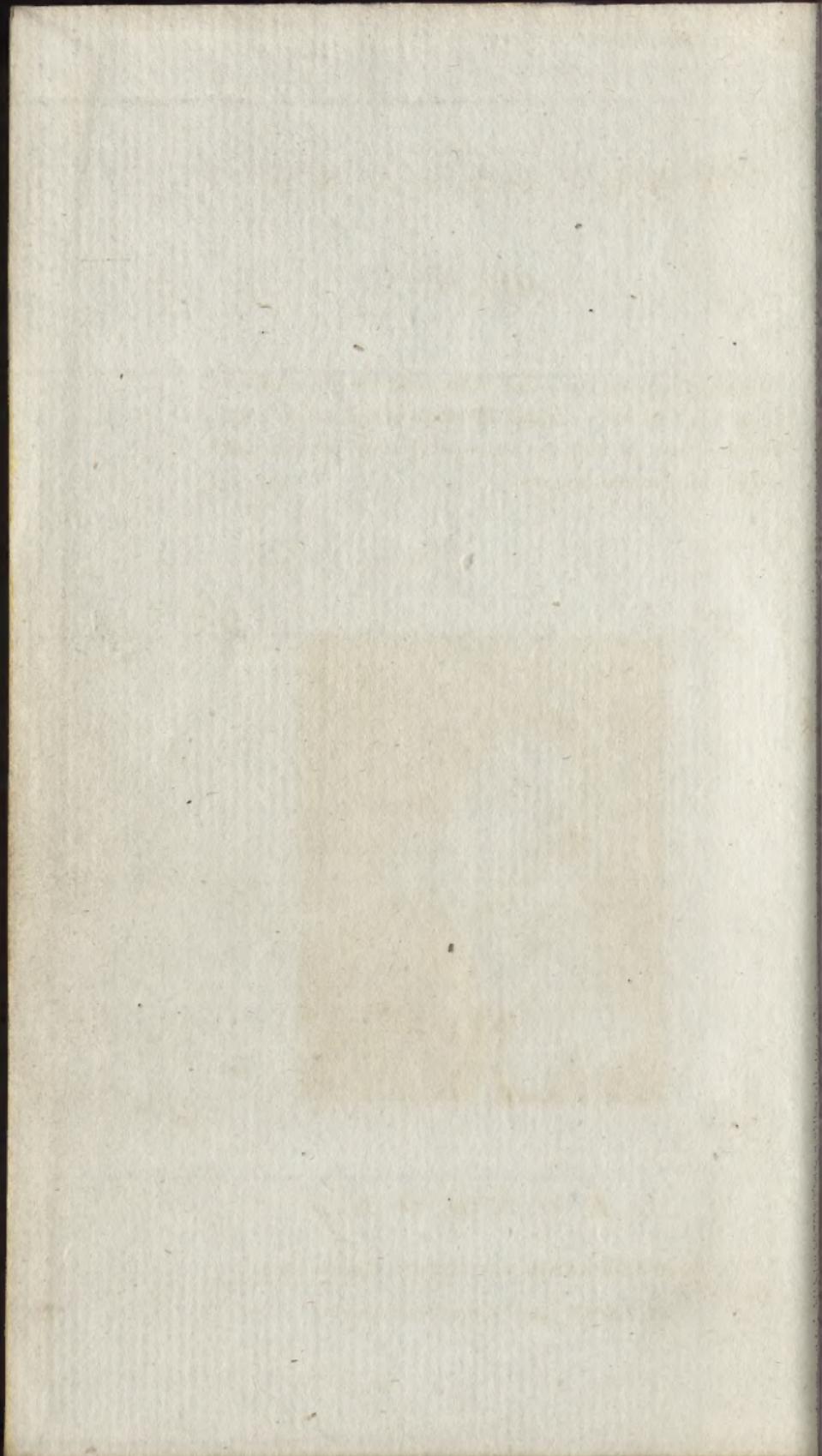


LWCPOL

2 vols. \$175.-



WALPOLIANA.

VOL. I.

Mr Gray the poet, has often observed to me, that, if any man were to form a Book of what he had seen and heard himself, it must, in whatever hands, prove a most useful and entertaining one.

Walpole.

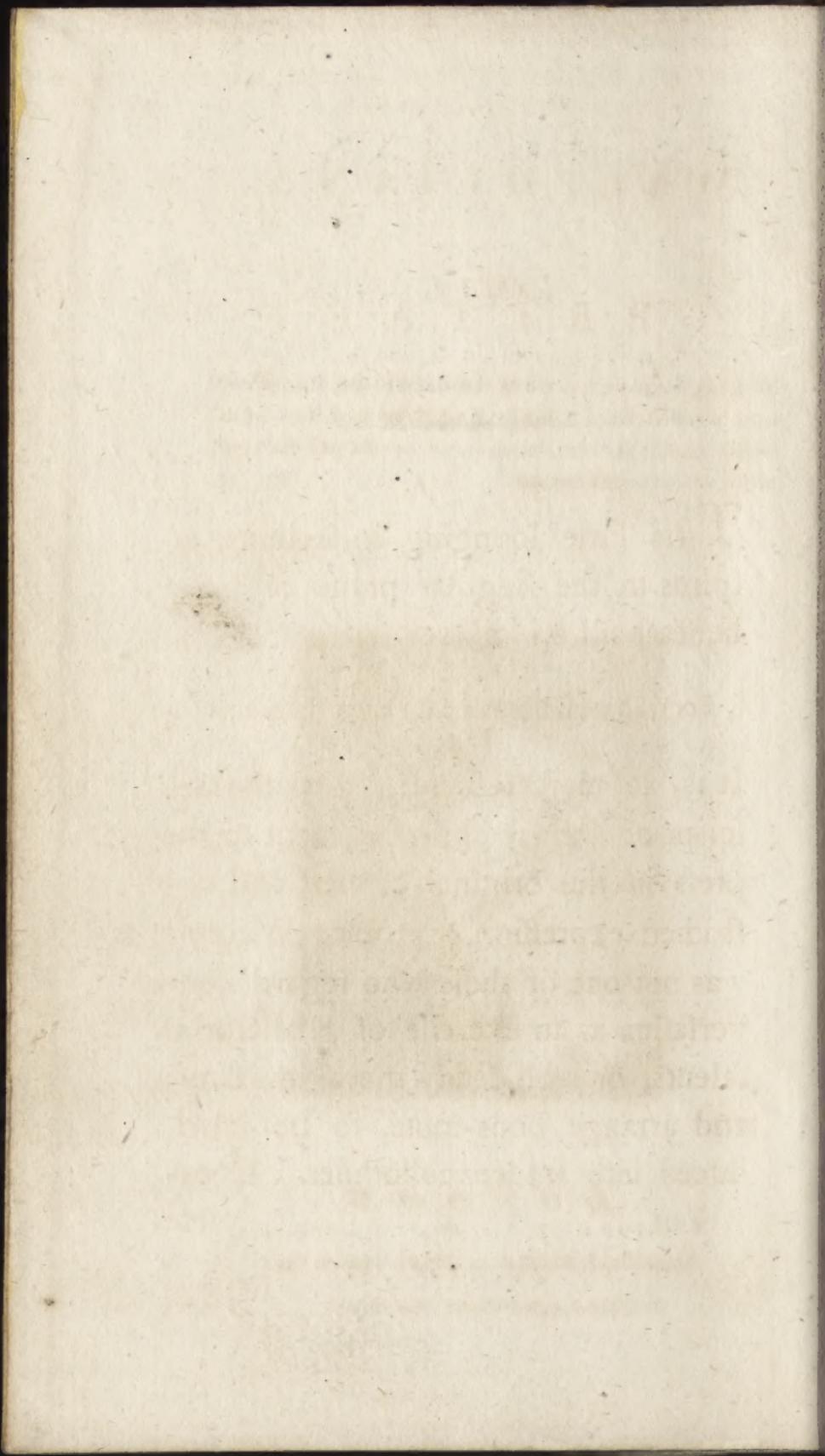


P. Thomson sc.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS little lounging miscellany aspires to the singular praise of being beneath all criticism :

For who would break a fly upon the wheel?

It is, in most instances, a mere transcript of literary chit-chat, sent to the press in the original careless and unstudied expression. Horace Walpole was not one of those who regard conversation as an exercise of gladiatorial talents, or who study moral maxims, and arrange bons-mots, to be introduced into future colloquies. Com-

plete ease and carelessness he regarded as the chief charms of conversation. To have employed therefore a more elevated style, or more formal arrangement, in these trifling pages, would have been so far from an improvement, that it would have destroyed their genuine effect. Buffon has remarked, that a man's clothes are a part of the individual animal, and pass into the idea of the character. As this work walks forth in deshabille, it will afford a more faithful resemblance, than if it were pranked in velvet and gold lace.

If criticism can be applied to such a production as the present, it must proceed upon a just idea of its feeble nature, and hesitating pretensions. It cannot be estimated as a literary production :

Nos hæc novimus esse nihil.

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It must be weighed solely as a transcript of conversation, which may be both amusing and instructive, and yet never aspire to the research, selection, and arrangement, necessary for the public ear.

This apology may be requisite for the editor's disregard of any plan, or connexion of parts, in the present miscellany, which contains anecdotes, remarks, letters, &c. &c. just as they were registered, or happened to start from memory, or from the drawer. It would have been a matter of slight toil to have arranged the whole under distinct heads, had not the absence of art, and the want of order, been considered as charms of the landscape. *Maxima est ars celare artem:* but here, as no art was required, there was none to be concealed. The native graces would only have been injured by the heavy labour of formality.

In our language it is believed there is only one legitimate collection of this kind, the Table Talk of Selden—and the form and size of these little volumes are calculated to be arranged by the curious on the same shelf. But from the date of Luther's Table Talk (which might admit of an interesting abstract), down to the latest French *Ana*, such productions have always been considered as altars erected to merit, as chief testimonies of literary esteem. And so exuberant were Mr. Walpole's mental riches, in the ready cash of anecdote, wit, judicious remark, epistolary elegance, that his warmest or coldest friends need not tremble at this publication of his colloquial sentiments. When the idea was suggested, his modesty declined it, on the ground of the non-importance (as he always insisted) of his literary character: but he furnished the editor with

with many anecdotes, &c. in his own hand-writing; and as the secret was buried in the editor's bosom, Mr. Walpole himself must have mentioned it to one or two, for, in a letter to Dr. Warton, he justly ridicules the idea of his undertaking such a work *himself*. Julius Cæsar and Tacitus made collections of the pointed sayings of others; but it is no wonder that the idea of his preserving his own should have appeared absurd to a mind so replete with a sense of decorum and propriety. As the design was of necessity *posthumous*, delicacy on the one side, and modesty on the other, prevented its being mentioned above once or twice; and the only allusion to it in his letters, is in that of August 1789, “I do not want you to throw a few daisies on my grave,” &c.

Several specimens of this miscel-

Many have already appeared in one of our best literary journals*, and have been favourably received. It is hoped the work, now published complete, will meet with equal candour. A few other anecdotes may perhaps arise to memory, or be communicated by others; but in no case shall the present form of two small volumes be exceeded. The editor of the Menagiana to one small volume, first published, added by degrees three others, consisting mostly of compilations of his own, a mixture justly to be reprobated.

Yet, however anxious the probity of an editor may be, in a collection of this kind, depending much on exactness of memory, it is impossible to avoid mistakes. A tale told fifteen years ago, may innocently be ascribed to a wrong person; or an expression mistated. Such unintentional lapses

* The Monthly Magazine.

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the reader will forgive; nor will he, it is hoped, be inclined to blame a few excursions, usual in the French *Ana*, the introduction of short papers, quotations, &c. only referred to, or silently read over, in the real conferences. Such a latitude has always been allowed in miscellanies of this denomination, as tending to enrich and variegate the original matter *.

Some of the letters are very brief, and unimportant; but Mr. Walpole's epistolary style was so graceful, that even fragments of it become valuable; and the reader's curiosity may be occasionally as much gratified by a short note from such a pen, as by a finished epistle. To borrow a metaphor from his favourite art, the lightest sketch

* Mr. Walpole himself has perhaps too much extended the term *ana*, by calling a collection of portraits, to illustrate Sevigné's Letters, *Sevigniana*.

by a master-painter will always be highly valued by connoisseurs.

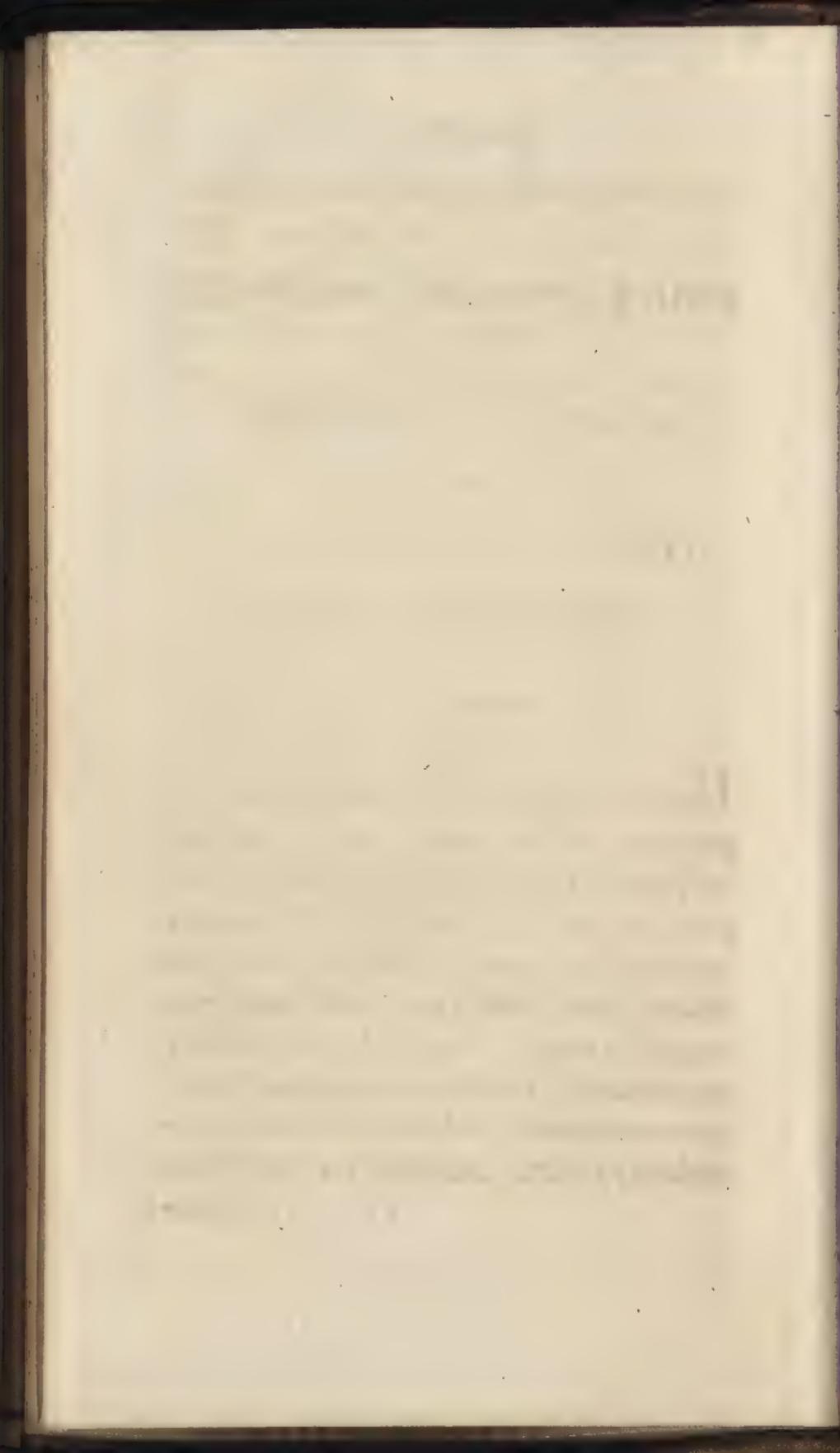
Of the anecdotes, &c. many, perhaps all, may have been heard from Mr. Walpole's mouth, by numerous other friends besides the editor. As to apophthegms and jests, so few have pretensions to real novelty, that some of the freshest in our daily papers may be found in Plutarch and Hierocles. In such baubles the manner and selection are chiefly to be noted; the gold may be as old as Adam, but the fabric constitutes it a modern toy.

Mr. Walpole made such repeated visits to Paris, and passed so much of his time in the first companies there; he was besides so fond of French manners, and French books; that a considerable share of his conversation was occupied with anecdotes of that soil. Hence the number of this description

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to be found in the present compilation; many of which, no doubt, may exist in French publications, as a bon-mot is never lost in that country; and some he may have repeated from recent reading.

BIOGRAPHICAL



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH,
IN
FUGITIVE CRAYONS,
OF
HORACE WALPOLE,
EARL OF ORFORD.

HAD this elegant writer, who united the good-sense of Fontenelle with the attic salt and graces of Count Antony Hamilton, composed memoirs of his own life, an example authorised by eminent names ancient and modern, every other pen must have been dropped in despair. But his literary modesty was invincible: his efforts as an author he always undervalued; and in plain truth, independently of this character, his life would have

have afforded few and barren materials. An idle life must always be a dull one, in every sense.

Nor need it be concealed that, like Gray the poet, he was averse to the degraded imputation of being an author. By soliciting mock subscriptions for works, never, thank heaven! to be published, and by other mean and devious devices, the character of author had, about the time of his birth, incurred considerable contempt. The fashion of the court, under the first and second George, must also have had its weight with a young man of fashion, the son of their favourite minister; and one such expression as that of the late Duke of Cumberland to the late Mr. Gibbon*, would have effectually stifled all Mr. Walpole's literary exertions.

In another point of view, the character of author was beneath Mr. Walpole's pretensions. Ancient pedigree, high birth from a family to which nobility was the more dear

* Soon after Gibbon published his last volumes, he attended at the duke's levee, who saluted him with this elegant flattery, "What! Mr. Gibbon, still scribble, scribble?"

as it was the recent reward of superior merit, continual motion in the first spheres of life, the respect and deference paid to his father and family by all the pride and all the wealth in the land, were considerations which few minds could have overcome ; and it is no wonder that the very name of Walpole was considered as an inalienable inheritance of fame, which the dubious celebrity of an author might have endangered, but could not have increased. The whig aristocracy, to which Mr. Walpole belonged, never yielded to the tory aristocracy in the claims of family pride and ambition : the favourite idol, Power, was equally adored by both ; the radical difference was on what pedestal to place it, on popular liberty, or popular slavery. Mr. Walpole's fashionable life, and repeated residences at Paris, fostered these inborn ideas ; and the celebrity of lineage continued, unsuspectedly, to maintain a weight far superior to the mean and modern glory of talents.

But, as Voltaire told Congreve, “ Had you been only a private gentleman, I should have spared this visit, which arises solely from your fame

fame as an author," so Mr. Walpole's birth and death might have been limited to a monumental inscription, if his MIND had not opened a path to a superior emanation of fame. By this immortal claim, he, who might have flumbered in a peerage, aspires to a nich in the Biographia Britannica; if a lively writer, wearing his own hair, may have any claim among the frizzled wigs of so many *famous** parsons, hierarchic and presbyterian.

Horace Walpole was born in the year 1717; the month and day may be traced in some one of the peerages, by any idle person who has got such books. A singular alliance joined his father, a decided whig, with the daughter of John Shorter, Esq. the son of Sir John Shorter, arbitrarily appointed mayor of London by the special favour of James II. Horace was the third, and youngest, son of this marriage. On the death of this his first wife, Sir Robert Walpole wedded Maria

* "All men famous in their generations," says Holy Writ.

Skerret, who bore only a daughter, Lady Maria.

Eton school imparted the first literary tinge to the mind of Horace Walpole, who here formed his acquaintance with Gray the poet, a name ever to be eminent, while genius and literature are revered by mankind. About the year 1734 both proceeded to complete their education at Cambridge. Mr. Walpole was of King's College; and his verses in memory of Henry VI. the founder, dated Feb. 1738, may be regarded as his first production, and no unfavourable omen of his future abilities.

In the summer of that year, Mr. Walpole, now arrived at majority, was appointed inspector-general of the exports and imports; a place which he soon after exchanged for the sinecure office of usher of the Exchequer, worth three thousand pounds a year. Other posts soon followed, to the further annual amount of seventeen hundred pounds, his father being still in the plenitude of his power.

Not inclining to enter so early into political bustle and parliamentary life, he pre-

vailed on his father to permit him to travel abroad for a few years. Mr. Gray was induced to accompany him. They left England in March 1739, and proceeded to France and Italy. Upon their return, in May 1741, a dispute arose at Reggio, on their route from Florence to Venice. Mr. Walpole liberally assumed the blame: but Mr. Gray was certainly not the most pleasant of companions; and his peculiarities, though those of a man of great genius and erudition, were haughty, and impatient, and intolerant of the peculiarities of others. The conscious independence, the inborn pride of talents, are often most unfortunate to their possessors; while torpid, pliant, and even-tempered dulness shakes its head at the folly of wisdom. Except a man abandon society, no talents can render him independent of its forms; and Mr. Walpole was, in every point of view, intitled to great deference from Mr. Gray, whose temper was more inclined to expect compliance, than to pay it. If at the same time we reflect that Mr. Gray had then no wreath of fame, we must leave his future reputation out

out of the estimate. In any other similar case we should have said, "Here is a man travelling in the highest style, at the expence of another, whose splendor he shares; introduced by him to courts and princes; in short, so much elevated, that his head becomes giddy, so that he quarrels for some trifles with his liberal benefactor; and, by the ill temper of an hour, forfeits his favour for life, and ruins all his own reasonable expectations." There can, indeed, be no doubt that, had it not been for this idle indulgence of his own haughty temper, Mr. Gray would immediately on his return have received, as usual, a pension or office from Sir Robert Walpole: and it is probable that some peevish expression, of contempt of any such remuneration, placed an insuperable bar betwixt him and his friend's intentions.

To leave these painful reflections on the weakness of a man of talents, Mr. Walpole, upon his return, appears as member of parliament for Callington in Cornwall; and in March 1742 he made an animated speech in defence of his father, when a committee of

secrecy was agitated, in order to examine the conduct of the minister. He seems, however, to have been dissatisfied with his own powers of oratory, as he was afterwards a silent senator, though his political existence continued, as member for Castle Rising in Norfolk in 1747, and for King's Lynn in 1754 and 1761. His "Counter-Address to the Public, on the late Dismissal of a General Officer" (Conway), appeared in 1764. That general enjoyed the particular intimacy of Mr. Walpole, as a friend and relation, for a long series of years, as appears from the large correspondence lately published. The scene of politics was closed, in 1767, by a letter addressed to the Mayor of Lynn, announcing the intention of retiring from parliament. The chief heads of this masculine epistle are, that a warm contest was apprehended, in consequence of ministerial corruption, which he fears "will end in the ruin of this constitution and country;" and that he wished to preserve the peace of the borough, which he had represented in two parliaments, without offering, or being asked for, the smallest gratification

tification by any one of his constituents; that, after having sitten above five-and-twenty years in parliament, he can safely say, that he has never asked nor received a personal favour from any minister, but has been guided solely by the principles of the revolution, which placed the present family on the throne.

Though Mr. Walpole thus closed his public part in politics, yet he continued to be consulted by the leaders of opposition, a distinction due to his name, age, and experience. He is believed to have approved, if not advised, the noted coalition of North and Fox. But he never suffered self-interest to interfere on such occasions; he was a firm and steady supporter of the cause of freedom, till the French revolution, or *subversion*, as Mr. Gibbon emphatically styles it in his posthumous works, shook and embroiled all the former opinions of mankind. The decree for the abolition of nobility conspired with his own accession to the peerage of Orford, to excite a decided enmity against that revolution; and insensibly against its pretence of freedom. An old man of seventy-three could scarcely

be expected to sacrifice all his former ideas to those new and untried experiments; and even a democrat, if he possess common candour, will not blame the Earl of Orford for sheltering his aged laurels under the Royal Oak. The progress of his ideas on this occasion may be the more easily traced, if we reflect that, from the first, he shewed a cordial contempt of Rousseau, and the other French *philosophes*, so much revered by the revolutionists: accustomed to estimate man by his only real standards, of history and experience, he abhorred the extravagant ignorance of their theories, and their mad attempts to unite the totally discordant principles of reason and atheism. Himself a rational and experimental philosopher, he preferred an old system under which many nations had flourished, to theories beautiful in appearance, but which might lead to destruction. A plain house, on a solid soil, was justly esteemed more comfortable than a palace on a land of earthquakes. He always thought a monarch necessary to public freedom, *nusquam gratior libertas quam sub rege pio*: but, on the other hand,

hand, he regarded public liberty as the chief ornament and security of the throne, which despotism might render odious, and even endanger its fall. Those self-interested syco-phants, commonly styled friends of a king, were by Mr. Walpole execrated as his chief and most decided foes. His politics were, like his religion, moderate and rational, not enthusiastic. He at all times hated democracy, which he considered as a theory too refined for human nature ; and subordination of ranks was with him the golden chain of Homer. Human life he viewed as a series of unavoidable errors and passions, founded on deceitful appearances, moral and physical : he did not choose to anatomise his mistress, nor to use truth as an instrument of torment and disorder. With him there remained no doubt that the mass of mankind were, of absolute necessity, doomed to ignorance ; and that the new mirrors of reason might dazzle the populace by a few flashing beams, but never could distribute a regular, continual light. He highly approved a saying of Gibbon to the Editor, " Those tenets may make the peo-

ple giddy, but cannot enlighten or invigorate them. You or I may venture on a single glass of liqueur; but what would be the consequence if we opened hogsheads of it to the people in the street?"

So much for Mr. Walpole's political opinions, which form an essential part of his biography: and to have omitted them, even in this feeble sketch, might have been considered as a parallel absurdity to that of Mallet, who is said to have written the life of Bacon, without reflecting that he was a philosopher.

Mr. Walpole's pursuits, as a connoisseur, and as a man of letters, remain to be considered.

In 1747 he purchased a small tenement at Strawberry-hill, near Twickenham, which he afterwards altered and enlarged in the Gothic taste of building; and crowded the apartments with such a profusion of paintings and curiosities, ancient and modern, that it may be regarded as one of the most interesting residences in England. His fortune, unincumbered with matrimonial expences, or fashionable extravagances, enabled him to erect
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a most laudable monument of his love of the arts. He used to term it a paper house, the walls being very slight, and the roof not the most secure in heavy rains; but in viewing the apartments, particularly the magnificent gallery, all such ideas vanished in admiration. The library, and the dining parlour, were built in 1753; the gallery, round tower, great cloister, and cabinet, in 1760 and 1761; not to mention later additions.

I know not if Mr. Bateman's monastery at Old Windsor were prior in order of time, but it has more uniformity of design. Not to mention minute discordances, there are several parts of Strawberry-hill which belong to the religious, and others to the castellated form of Gothic architecture. But such is the general effect, that pleasure supersedes censure, and criticism wishes to be deceived.

In 1757 Mr. Walpole here opened a printing press; the first publication being the two sublime odes of Gray, with whom he had renewed his acquaintance in 1744 *. Their

* The name of the first printer, I suppose, was William Robinson,

Their subsequent letters, indeed, bespeak a complete intimacy. The next publications were the translation of a part of Hentzner's Travels—and Mr. Walpole's Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors, and Fugitive Pieces. So early as 1747 he had appeared as an author, in the *Ædes Walpolianæ*, or description of his father's house at Houghton in Norfolk.

A catalogue of the Strawberry-hill publications will be found in the Appendix to these volumes. But, in estimating Mr. Walpole's literary character, it becomes indispensable to offer a brief review of his chief productions.

His poetry seldom rises above the middling, but has several forcible lines, and elegant turns of expression. These remarks are confined to his Fugitive Pieces, for in the Mysterious Mother he aspires to the praise of real genius, by the strong, characteristic, and appropriated

Robinson, who appears in "Spence's Parallel," S. H. 1758. The last printer was Mr. Kirgate, whose modest merit was supplanted in Lord Orford's will by intriguing impudence, as always happens.

language;

language; by a skilful anatomy of the human heart and passions; and by a striking originality, which pervades and animates the whole.

In the same class may be estimated the Castle of Otranto, which, however, has rather the wildness of Salvator Rosa, than the grand genius of Michael Angelo. It raises expectations which are not gratified—one reads it once—one is disappointed, and returns to it no more. It has nevertheless the merit of originality; and, if the spectres raised sometimes injure the magician, they at least prove the power of his art. Two objections have been started, that it first appeared as a literary forgery, as a translation from the Italian by one Marshall; and that it led the way to many wild romances that have followed.

I. If a literary forgery pervert no real fact in history or antiquities, but be merely calculated to please the reader, in the paths of poetry and romance, it is innocent. A rigid censor, at a time when he is perhaps himself indulging in “hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness,” should seriously examine whether

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the blame be not more noxious than the offence. In the Spectator, No. 542, the reader may consult Mr. Addison's vindication of such innocent frauds: and the morality of Addison may be considered as the reflection of a most clear and unstained mirror.

2. The other objection supposes that novels, or representations of real life, are preferable to romances, or pictures of an imaginary existence. This it denied. Novels, both in France and England, have proved a public bane, destructive of female duties and morals, subversive of every idea of the dull realities of life: and calculated, by false pictures of visionary happiness, to excite discontent at the actual and trivial scenes of human existence. While life itself presents so many cares and pangs, the mind, instead of being prepared to bear them with fortitude, is dissolved in imaginary sensibilities—novels impart a kind of new sense of things, which sense of things, as it never can be gratified, is an infallible path to misery, is the grand secret of being unhappy. Pages might be written on this topic; but it is far from the

present intention to censure all novels. Many are exquisite compositions for minds already formed; and a few may even be entrusted to unskilful youth. Romances, on the contrary, as they depict no scenes of real life, can never mislead. Young minds may seek, and find where they do not exist, cruel fathers, harsh husbands and brothers, dying swains, innocent adulteries, &c. &c.; but even infancy will rarely believe in flying horses, magical palaces, and all the unsubstantial fabric of romance. The one is studied and revolved, as a real delineation of life; while the other, far too wild for any such supposition, only strikes for a moment, like the unreal creations of a magical lantern. Romance presents a cup of flight and momentary intoxication, while the other holds a philtre that deranges the imagination for life.

In briefly considering Mr. Walpole's other prose works, the Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors first established his reputation, as a most agreeable collector of anecdotes. It is, however, often inaccurate and incomplete.

incomplete. In treating antiquarian subjects extreme accuracy is required; and extreme accuracy is unattainable, except by extensive reading, and sedulous labour. Fashionable company, and luxurious ease, are not schools of accuracy; and the “Historic Doubts concerning Richard III.” present melancholy proofs of this truth. Even in the recent anecdotes of the *Memoires de Grammont*, Mr. Walpole sometimes embroiled his author by radical mistakes.

Those works of Mr. Walpole, which will probably be reprinted for centuries to come, are his *Letters*, *The Mysterious Mother*, and *The Anecdotes of Painting in England*. If the metaphor be not quaint, the last may be considered as the basis of his column of celebrity, the letters as the shaft, the tragedy as a finished capital. The amiable ease, and playful elegance, the striking expression, ready sense, and graceful turns of his language, were singularly adapted to epistolary correspondence.

In our estimate of those works, which have survived expiring generations, and withstood
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the shock of discordant centuries, utility goes hand in hand with genius. The useful page of the ancient compiler is placed on the same shelf of antiquity, with the original creation of talent. Pliny's Natural History, for example, the amazing compilation of a man of rank, of a busy statesman, is revered as a classical production, as an exuberant treasure of ancient knowledge. A modern author needs never hesitate to rest his chief fame on so useful a compilation as the Anecdotes of Painting in England. It is true the materials were chiefly collected by Vertue, as those of Voltaire's Histoire Generale were by a Benedictine monk. Private curiosity may collect materials, and form plans: the merit lies in offering them to general use; the perpetual praise in securing their perpetual existence.

Even in this work a few mistakes, chiefly chronological, might be corrected; but they are so few, that the work will ever be perused with delight, even by the most learned reader. It is not only an entertaining and instructive book, but has a national merit, in contributing

contributing to revive and encourage a general taste for the fine arts.

In the fourth volume of this interesting production appeared the Essay on modern Gardening, written in 1770. The editor suggested to Mr. Walpole a singular passage in Tacitus, which loudly indicates Nero as the founder of this new art. Mr. Walpole seemed much struck with it, and said he would insert it in the next edition; but he changed his mind, probably not liking such a founder. Yet, if posterity find a famine arise from the extent of our artificial waters, and forests, and delicious deserts, created at the expence of unpicturesque corn-fields, Nero may perhaps reclaim his honours. The passage is short. “ Ceterum Nero usus est patriæ ruinis, extruxitque domum, in quo haud perinde gemmæ et aurum miraculo essent, solita pridem et luxu vulgata, quam arva, et stagna; et, in modum solitudinum, hinc silvæ, inde aperta spatia et prospectus: magistris et machinatoribus Severo et Celere, quibus ingenium et audacia erat etiam quæ natura denegavisset per artem tentare, et viribus

ribus principis inludere." Ann. xv. 42. Which may be thus translated: "Moreover, Nero availed himself of the ruins of his country, and erected a palace, in which gems and gold, usual and vulgar luxuries, were not so much to be admired, as the lawns and lakes, and, in the manner of deserts, here woods, there open spaces and prospects: the masters and contrivers being Celer and Severus, who possessed genius and enterprise to attempt by art what nature had denied, and to spread delusions with princely magnificence."

The other incidents of Mr. Walpole's life present little to interest an indifferent reader. In 1749 it was nearly closed by the pistol of Maclean the highwayman, which went off by accident, after he had robbed our author, who has told the story, in his usual pleasing manner, in a paper in the *World*. His supposed letter from the King of Prussia to Rousseau, in 1766, is a good specimen of dry humour; but it inflamed the dispute between that unhappy *philosophe* and David Hume, who was supposed an associate in the plot. Rousseau's extreme nervous irritability (often

exdit).

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the foil of great genius) was the curse of his existence ; and his whole life was embittered by a tincture of insanity, a peevish dream of imaginary evils, and designs against his infatuated self-importance. The powers of medicine, composing draughts of camphor and opium, baths and fumigations, would have had more effect than all the nostrums of modern philosophy. But it is clear from his Confessions that his madness (he owns that he left England in a fit of insanity) was like that of a Swedenborg, of a nondescript kind ; that all his nonentities appearing to him realities, he never consulted physicians, who, by calming the nerves, and strengthening the frame, might have convinced him that a *philosophe* is only a kind of violin, which sounds as it happens to be tuned.

Upon this philosophical fiddle Hume played in the most tender and pathetic style ; but the strings were loose, and the frame, though an exquisite Cremona, was injured, so that discords alone were heard. Those discords were certainly not appeased by Mr. Walpole ; whose letters to David on this occasion deservedly

servedly astonished that real, mild, unfanatic, unenthusiastic, and universally tolerant, philosopher, as betraying a contempt of letters and philosophy totally unworthy of their author. To judge of a man's real and fixed opinions, from a splenetic expression, or temporary effusion, would be most unjust. Yet if the reader will recur to the commencement of this slight biography, he will discover the clue of Mr. Walpole's sentiments, which Hume had not sufficient intimacy nor opportunities to observe. The pride of birth and rank, which the *philosophes*, and Rousseau in particular, attempted to level as adventitious and absurd, were ever in Mr. Walpole's eye far paramount to the fame of arts, letters, or philosophy. Alcibiades was, with him, a personage greatly superior to Socrates: angels, and people of rank, were created; vulgar people, vulgar painters, vulgar authors, were made, God knows how, on the fifth day of the creation, though the event was beneath the notice of any bible, richly bound and gilt.

Another incident, which must not be omitted,

omitted, is the unfortunate affair of Chatterton. In this Mr. Walpole has certainly been blamed for mere contingencies, which no benevolence nor prudence could have foreseen or prevented. Was he to foresee that Chatterton should evince great abilities; or that a person who began the acquaintance by sending a notorious forgery, was nevertheless to turn out worthy of patronage? Had Mr. Walpole procured an office for Chatterton, might not the youth's violent passions have squandered its produce, and the same catastrophe have occurred? But his own Vindication will sufficiently satisfy any candid person on this head: and the charge would never have been heard, had it not been founded by two descriptions of prejudiced persons, those enthusiasts who believed in Rowley's authenticity, or who regarded Chatterton's Poems (now forgotten) as chief efforts of genius; and those who eagerly sought to gratify their enmity against Mr. Walpole for his neglect of them or their writings.

The forgery of Rowley's supposed Poems not only violated many facts in history and antiquities,

antiquities, but proceeded so far as the fabrication of pretended ancient parchments. It is therefore justly to be condemned ; but that it should impose on any man of common learning is wonderful. The orthography, or cacography, style, manner, &c. &c. of the English language, in the reigns of Henry V. and VI. are so remote from the mock Saxon of Rowley, that they are precisely the same with those in the reign of Henry VIII. a century after, as any person, who will take the trouble of examining papers and letters of those periods, will immediately perceive.

More relevant to the present memoir is an observation, arising from the transaction with Chatterton. A more gross error never prevailed than that which was generally adopted during Mr. Walpole's life, and which alone led Chatterton to apply to him ; namely, that he was a beneficent patron of artists and men of letters.

Mr. Walpole was of a benignant and charitable disposition, but no man ever existed who had less of the character of a patron. He has somewhere said that an artist has pen-

cils, and an author has pens, and the public must reward them as it happens. He might have added, in strict character, that posts and pensions, and even presents, were the allotted and eternal perquisites of persons of quality—the manna of the chosen people.

As to artists, he paid them what they earned; and he commonly employed mean ones, that the reward might be the smaller. The portraits in the Anecdotes of Painting disgrace the work; and a monument consecrated to the arts is deeply inscribed with the chilling penury of their supposed patron. Yet no one was more prone to censure such imperfections in the productions of others.

As to authors, it would be truly difficult to point out one who received any solid pecuniary patronage from Mr. Walpole. His praise was valuable; but the powers of his voice were not extensive, and never called forth distant echoes. Chatterton could not expect what neither Gray, nor Mason, nor other favourite men of genius, had ever seen. With an income of about five thousand pounds a year, a mere pittance for a person

of

of his birth and rank, it is no wonder that poverty prevented him from ever giving fifty pounds, or even five, to any man of talents; for he considered an ascetic life as very beneficial to the mental powers. Modesty also forbade his making presents, or doing any essential services, to artists or authors, who might perhaps, in their idle emotions of gratitude, have proclaimed the benefits received. This he avoided by silently transmitting his money to the bank, that he might cut up fat in a rich and titled will; or by laying out on some breviary, or bauble of the days of Queen Bess, what might have saved genius from despair, might have invigorated the hand of industry, and have secured the purest and most lasting of all kinds of reputation, the celestial fame of goodness and beneficence. Had the house of Medici, his favourite family, been contented with their opulence and their gallery, we should never have heard of Lorenzo the Magnificent, nor of Leo the Patron of Letters. It was not the selfish cloud, but the scattered shower, that awoke the flowers of applause.

If biography did not operate as an example of reproof, as well as of approbation, it would be useless to mankind. An academician may pronounce an *elegy*, and a schoolboy an exercise, but a just and candid delineation of human character must ever “smell of mortality,” to use an expression of Shakspeare. A faultless character is the creature of imagination, while the chief object of biography is truth. And, with his faults, how much superior does Horace Walpole appear to thousands of his rank and wealth, whose faults and pursuits are alike beneath the notice of biography?

In 1791, by the death of his nephew, the title of Orford, the unwished and sad bequest of an expiring lineage, reverted to Horace Walpole, at the advanced age of seventy-four. It was some time before he would sign, or assent to, his new title; and he never took his seat in parliament. The additional income, as he told the editor, was about 3800*l.* yearly, but with several new and unavoidable claims of expenditure. The title is now extinct: the estate of Houghton has passed to Lord Cholmondeley.

A letter

A letter in this collection will shew Mr. Walpole's feelings on this occasion, which only served to disturb the repose of his declining years. The new title, the gout, the French revolution, conspired with old age to tease this amiable man; and his two last years were unhappy to himself, tormenting to the patience of his servants, and disastrous to some of his old and valued friendships. On the 2d of March, 1797, he expired at his house in Berkeley-square, in the eightieth year of a life prolonged by temperance, and rarely corroded by care, or disturbed by passions.

The ruling passion, repeatedly elucidated above, is strongly marked in his last will. Though he had many ingenious friends, not one slight memorial appears of his love of genius or talents. He bequeaths about one hundred thousand pounds—and bequeaths it as every person of quality should do.

THE person of Horace Walpole was short and slender, but compact and neatly formed. When viewed from behind, he had somewhat of a boyish appearance, owing to the form of his person, and the simplicity of his dress. His features may be seen in many portraits; but none can express the placid goodness of his eyes, which would often sparkle with sudden rays of wit, or dart forth flashes of the most keen and intuitive intelligence. His laugh was forced and uncouth, and even his smile not the most pleasing.

His walk was enfeebled by the gout; which, if the editor's memory do not deceive, he mentioned that he had been tormented with since the age of twenty-five; adding, at the same time, that it was no hereditary complaint, his father, Sir Robert Walpole, who always drank ale, never having known that disorder, and far less his other parent. This painful complaint not only affected his feet, but attacked his hands to such a degree that his fingers were always swelled and deformed, and

and discharged large chalk-stones once or twice a year; upon which occasions he would observe, with a smile, that he must set up an inn, for he could chalk up a score with more ease and rapidity than any man in England.

Whether owing to this disorder, or to a sense of the superiority of mental delights, and clear even spirits, to the feverish delirium of debauch, the perdition of memory, and the slow convalescence amid the pangs of self-reproach, he passed the latter half, at least, of his life in the most strict temperance, though in his youth it is believed he was rather addicted to the luxuries of a replete table. Though he sat up very late, either writing or conversing, he generally rose about nine o'clock, and appeared in the breakfast-room, his constant and chosen apartment, with fine vistas towards the Thames. His approach was proclaimed, and attended, by a favourite little dog, the legacy of the Marquise du Deffand; and which ease and attention had rendered so fat that it could hardly move. This was placed beside him on a small sofa; the tea-kettle, stand and heater, were brought in, and he drank two or three cups of that liquor

liquor out of most rare and precious ancient porcelain of Japan, of a fine white embossed with large leaves. The account of his china-cabinet, in his description of his villa, will shew how rich he was in that elegant luxury. The loaf and butter were not spared, for never tasting even what is called no-supper, he was appetised for breakfast; and the dog and the squirrels had a liberal share of his repast.

Dinner was served up in the small parlour, or large dining-room, as it happened: in winter generally the former. His valet supported him down stairs; and he ate most moderately of chicken, pheasant, or any light food. Pastry he disliked, as difficult of digestion, though he would taste a morsel of venison-pye. Never, but once that he drank two glasses of white-wine, did the editor see him taste any liquor, except ice-water. A pail of ice was placed under the table, in which stood a decanter of water, from which he supplied himself with his favourite beverage. This his guest would occasionally share, and found it a delicious refreshment, diffusing the genial warmth imparted by liqueurs, without any of their subsequent heating and pernicious

nicious effects. It is indeed surprising that this luxury of every porter in Naples should continue so rare in other countries.

If his guest liked even a moderate quantity of wine, he must have called for it during dinner, for almost instantly after he rang the bell to order coffee up stairs. Thither he would pass about five o'clock; and generally resuming his place on the sofa, would sit till two o'clock in the morning, in miscellaneous chit-chat, full of singular anecdotes, strokes of wit, and acute observations, occasionally sending for books, or curiosities, or passing to the library, as any reference happened to arise in conversation. After his coffee he tasted nothing; but the snuff box of *tabac d'etrennes*, from Fribourg's, was not forgotten, and was replenished from a canister lodged in an ancient marble urn of great thickness, which stood in the window seat, and served to secure its moisture and rich flavour. *

Such was a private rainy day of Horace Walpole. The forenoon quickly passed in roaming through the numerous apartments

of

of the house, in which, after twenty visits, still something new would occur; and he was indeed constantly adding fresh acquisitions. Sometimes a walk in the grounds would intervene, on which occasions he would go out in his slippers through a thick dew; and he never wore a hat. He said that, on his first visit to Paris, he was ashamed of his effeminacy, when he saw every little meagre Frenchman, whom even he could have thrown down with a breath, walking without a hat, which he could not do, without a certainty of that disease, which the Germans say is endemial in England, and is termed by the natives *le catch-cold*. The first trial cost him a slight fever, but he got over it, and never caught cold afterwards: draughts of air, damp rooms, windows open at his back, all situations were alike to him in this respect. He would even shew some little offence at any solicitude, expressed by his guests on such an occasion, as an idea arising from the seeming tenderness of his frame; and would say, with a half-smile of good-humoured crossness, “ My back is the same with

with my face, and my neck is like my nose." His iced water he not only regarded as a preservative from such an accident, but he would sometimes observe that he thought his stomach and bowels would last longer than his bones; such conscious vigour and strength in those parts did he feel from the use of that beverage.

Occasionally he would go in an evening to visit Mrs. Clive, to whom he had assigned an adjacent cottage. The charms of that lady's conversation were wonderful, and she was the life of every company in which she appeared. Though she was regarded as Mr. Walpole's *chère amie*, the delights of her conversation seem to have been his chief object.

It is uncertain that he ever entertained any idea of marriage, though it be said that, after his accession to the title, he offered his hand successively to two most amiable and interesting sisters, with the sole view of exerting all the power he had over an expiring peerage, by conferring it on a female, certainly in every respect most worthy of such a distinction.

tion. He was an elegant and devout admirer of the fair sex, in whose presence he would exceed his usual powers of conversation; his spirits were animated as if by a cordial, and he would scatter his wit and *petits mots* with dazzling profusion.

His engaging manners, and gentle, endearing affability to his friends, exceed all praise. Not the smallest hauteur, or consciousness of rank or talents, appeared in his familiar conferences; and he was ever eager to dissipate any constraint that might occur, as imposing a constraint upon himself, and knowing that any such chain enfeebles and almost annihilates the mental powers. Endued with exquisite sensibility, his wit never gave the smallest wound even to the grossest ignorance of the world, or the most morbid hypochondriac bashfulness: *experto crede.*

Humane, benignant, to his servants, he was at times even subject to the caprices of Colomb, his Swiss valet-de-chambre. If he ordered a tree to be felled, perhaps he was arbitrarily opposed; but no man is a hero to his valet-de-chambre, and those who know

real life often feel that it is better to give up one's inclination now and then, than to lose one's temper; and that those who are conscious that they are necessary will assume power. To those whose services he could dispense with he was, at times, sufficiently stern, especially in his last years: but sensibility and anger are nearly allied; and pain and weakness will seldom fail to irritate the mind through the body. Mr. Walpole was absurdly blamed for the fate of one servant, a fine but undeserving youth, by those who were ignorant of the circumstances. Fond of dress, the youth repeatedly stole plate, and sold or pawned it. Detected, sharply reprehended, and threatened by Colomb, the poor fellow hung himself on a tree in the grove. Mr. Walpole had not the slightest share in the transaction.

The mental powers of this pleasing and interesting writer have already been sufficiently estimated, and it is almost needless to add, that they chiefly consisted in an exquisite taste for the fine arts; and in what the French term *le fleur d'esprit*, the product of a brilliant

brilliant fancy, and rapid association of ideas, joined with good sense. Thus endued by nature and education, his ample fortune enabled him to enjoy a learned luxury, to pick all the roses of science, and leave the thorns behind. In the distribution of human affairs, it generally happens that those who have a decided propensity to letters or the arts are confined in the gloomy cells of penury, and oppressed with those cares which are the most foreign to their pursuits; while the delights of free genius, and excursive science, are chilled by the Fordid necessities of acquiring a daily maintenance. The opulent, on the contrary, rarely possess a warm and decided taste for the arts, and far less for literary labours: the gulf of dissipation, the oblivion not the enjoyment of life, lies between them and this paradise. To this paradise Mr. Walpole was admitted: and if human life can ever be said to run in a course of regular and uniform happiness, that happiness was his, endeared, perhaps, rather than diminished, by distant intervals of corporeal infirmity. Surrounded by every object that can delight

the

the mind or the eye, that can excite curiosity, or gratify taste; blessed with a strong propensity to some one, or other, interesting pursuit (the very secret of human felicity), and never deficient in the means of its accomplishment, he certainly moved in a sphere known to very few.

Quis meliore luto fixit præcordia Titan.

Even in trifles his taste for enjoyment was elegant and learned: the pots of tuberose, or of canary heliotropes, the papers of orange flowers, that perfumed his chamber, were luxuries rather feminine; but the censer or pot of frankincense, with which the parlour was scented after dinner, dispersed the steam of the viands, and enlivened the table not less by the perfume, than by the monastic anecdotes which occasionally accompanied its introduction.

Few companies, it is presumed, would have wished to have lost Mr. Walpole's conversation in the silence of cards. Yet he sometimes played; and his goodness imposed it on him as a duty to pass an evening at

11. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

whist with the old Duke of Montrose, who was blind, but contrived (by what means I forget) to manage his game.

The portrait prefixed, after M'Arden's private print from Sir Joshua Reynolds 1757, represents Mr. Walpole in the prime of life, and must have been very like, as strong traces of resemblance remained, particularly about the eyes. There are other prints by Reading and Parisot; not to mention a portrait by Eckardt, a drawing by Mr. Dance, a recent print by Barlow, and another pretty exact representation of his old age, in the collection of his works.

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do you mean to continue so, or shall
you see me the 6th willingly next week, when I mean to call at your door some
morning? I hope you are still in town. believe me D^r S^r very sincerely yours

Gray

Cambridge - July 7.

I shall be very glad, Dr, to see you here again whenever it
is convenient to you. Lest I should forget the time, be so good as
to acquaint me three or four days beforehand when you wish
to come, that I may not be out of the way, & I will fix a day for
expecting you. I am to

afflicted
humble servant
Hor Walpole

When it is come, I will, if you
give me leave acquaint you, & propose a day for your coming hither.

Fare
Oxford

yrs most sincerely
Oxford

WALPOLIANA.

I. BERNIS AND FLEURY.

CARDINAL de Bernis, when only an Abbé, solicited Cardinal Fleury, then four-score, for some preferment. Fleury told him fairly, he should never have any thing in his time: Bernis replied, “*Monseigneur j’attendrai* *.”

II. COUNTESS OF COVENTRY.

Towards the close of the reign of George the Second, the beautiful countess of Coventry talking to him on shows, and thinking only of the figure she herself should make in a procession, told him, the sight she wished most to see was a coronation.

III. THE CLERICAL GOWN.

Mr. Suckling, a clergyman of Norfolk, having a quarrel with a neighbouring gen-

* My Lord, I shall wait.

tleman, who insulted him, and at last told him, "Doctor, your gown is your protection;" replied, "It may be mine, but it shall not be your's;" pulled it off, and thrashed the aggressor.

IV. PATRIOTISM OF WILKES.

Depend upon it, my dear Sir, that Wilkes was in the pay of France, during the Wilkes and liberty days. Calling one day on the French minister, I observed a book on his table, with Wilkes's name in the first leaf. This led to a conversation, which convinced me. Other circumstances, too long and minute to be repeated, strengthened, if necessary, that conviction. I am as sure of it, as of any fact I know.

Wilkes at first cringed to Lord Bute. The embassy to Constantinople was the object of his ambition. It was refused—and you know what followed.

V. BUTE'S MINISTRY.

Lord Bute was my schoolfellow. He was a man of taste and science, and I do believe

lieve his intentions were good. He wished to blend and unite all parties. The tories were willing to come in for a *share* of power, after having been so long excluded—but the whigs were not willing to grant that share. Power is an intoxicating draught; the more a man has, the more he desires.

VI. LADY WORTLEY MONTAGUE.

The letters of Lady Wortley Montague are genuine. I have seen the originals, among which are some far superior to those in print. But some of them were very immodest. When the publication was about to take place, Lord Bute, who had married her daughter, sent for the editor, and offered one hundred pounds to suppress them. The man took the money, promised—and published.

Lady Wortley Montague was a playfellow of mine when both were children. She was always a dirty little thing. This habit continued with her. When at Florence, the Grand Duke gave her apartments in his palace. One room sufficed for every thing. When she went away, the stench was so

strong, that they were obliged to fumigate the chamber with vinegar for a week.

Pope gave her the Homer he had used in translating. I have got it: it is a small edition by Wetstein. Here it is. She wrote that little poem in the blank leaves.

VII. CONJUGAL AFFECTION.

A French gentleman, being married a second time, was often lamenting his first wife, before his second, who one day said to him, “*Monsieur, je vous assure qu'il n'y a personne qui la regrette plus que moi**.”

VIII. CONJUGAL WIT.

Another French lady wrote this letter to her husband. “*Je vous écris, parceque je n'ai rien à faire : je finis, parceque je n'ai rien à dire†.*”

IX. MONKS AND FRIARS.

What you say is perfectly just. Some

* “I assure, you, Sir, no one regrets her more than I.”

† “I write to you, because I have nothing to do; I end my letter, because I have nothing to say.”

degree

degree of learning is necessary even to compose a novel. How many modern writers confound monks and friars! Yet they were almost as different as laymen and priests. Monachism was an old institution for *laymen*. The friars, *freres*, or brothers, were first instituted in the thirteenth century, in order, by their preaching, to oppose the lollards. They united priesthood with monachism; but while the monks were chiefly confined to their respective houses, the friars were wandering about as preachers and confessors. This gave great offence to the secular clergy, who were thus deprived of profits and inheritances. Hence the satyric and impure figures of friars and nuns, in our old churches. Do you remember any example of retaliation? I suppose there were similar libels on the secular clergy in the chapels of friaries now abolished*.

X. MR. HOLLIS.

Mr. Hollis is always publishing republican

* Gross errors of this kind appear in the writings of Mrs. RADCLIFFE, and Mr. LEWIS. "The Monk" of the latter, both in his book and play, being in fact a friar, a being of a very different description. EDIT.

books; and yet professes great veneration for our constitution. I cannot reconcile this; our constitution being, in its leading parts, an oligarchy, the form perhaps, of all others, the most opposite to a republic.

Nota. Before the French revolution, Mr. Walpole was so warm a friend of freedom, that he was almost a republican. The change of his sentiments will be delineated in the close of these anecdotes.

XI. SYMPTOMS OF INSANITY.

My poor nephew Lord * * *, was deranged. The first symptom that appeared was, his sending a chaldron of coals as a present to the Prince of Wales, on learning that he was loaded with debts. He delighted in what he called *book-hunting*. This notable diversion consisted in taking a volume of a book, and hiding it in some secret part of the library, among volumes of similar binding and size. When he had forgot where the game lay, he hunted till he found it.

XII. A LONGING WOMAN.

Madame du Chatelet (Voltaire's Emilie),
proving

proving with child again, after a long interval, and king Stanislaus joking with her husband on it, he replied, “*Ah! Sire, elle en avoit si forte envie!*”—“*Mon ami,*” said the old king, “*c'étoit une envie d'une femme grosse**.”

XIII. A PRETTY METAPHOR.

A young lady marrying a man she loved, and leaving many friends in town, to retire with him into the country, Mrs. D. said prettily, “She has turned one and twenty shillings into a guinea.”

XIV. ROYAL FAVOUR.

A low Frenchman bragged that the king had spoken to him. Being asked what his majesty had said, he replied, “He bad me stand out of his way.”

XV. MADAM DU BARRY.

A great French lady, who was one of the first to visit Madam du Barry, after she was

* “Ah! Sire, she longed so much for it.”—“My friend, it was the longing of a woman with child.”

known to be the royal mistress, justifying herself to her niece on that account, said, "It is reported that the king gave an hundred thousand livres to countenance her ; but it is not true."—"No, madam," replied the niece nobly, "I dare say it is not true ; for it would have been too little."

XVI. PROOFS OF GENEALOGY.

A lord of the court being presented for the first time, Louis XIV. said afterwards, that he did not know the late lord of that name had had a son, having been reckoned impotent. "*Oh Sire !*" said Roquelaure, "*ils ont été tous impuissans de pere en fils.*"

XVII. VOLTAIRE AND ADDISON.

A story is told of Voltaire and Addison at a tavern. I do not believe Voltaire was in England while Addison was alive.

XVIII. PRICE OF MAKING A PARK A GARDEN.

Queen Caroline spoke of shutting up St. James's park, and converting it into a noble garden

garden for the palace of that name. She asked my father* what it might probably cost; who replied, “*only three CROWNS.*”

XIX. AN ANECDOTE CORRECTED.

Let me correct a story relating to the great duke of Marlborough. The duchess was pressing the duke to take a medicine, and with her usual warmth said, “I’ll be hanged if it do not prove serviceable.” Dr. Garth†, who was present, exclaimed, “Do take it then, my lord duke; for it must be of service, in one way or the other.”

XX. DOUBLE PUN.

A good pun is not amiss. Let me tell you one I met with in some book the other day. The Earl of Leicester, that unworthy favourite of Elizabeth, was forming a park about Cornbury, thinking to enclose it with posts and rails. As he was one day calculating the expence, a gentleman stood by, and

* Erroneously given to Chesterfield.

† By mistake put Lord Somers.

told

told the earl that he did not go the cheapest way to work. “ Why ? ” said my lord. “ Because,” replied the gentleman, “ if your Lordship will find *puffs*, the country will find *railing*. ”

XXI. PASSIONATE TEMPER.

General Sutton, brother of Sir Robert Sutton, was very passionate: Sir Robert Walpole the reverse. Sutton being one day with Sir Robert, while his *valet de chambre* was shaving him, Sir Robert said, “ John, you cut me; ”—and then went on with the conversation. Presently, he said again, “ John, you cut me ”—and a third time—when Sutton starting up in a rage, and doubling his fist at the servant, swore a great oath, and said, “ If Sir Robert can bear it, I cannot ; and if you cut him once more I ’ll knock you down.”

XXII. QUIN.

Quin sometimes said things at once witty and wise. Disputing concerning the execution of Charles I. “ But by what laws, ”
said

faid his opponent, “ was he put to death ? Quin replied, “ By all the laws he had left them.”

XXIII. AN INNOCENT MINISTRY.

He used to apply a story to the then ministry. A master of a ship calls out, “ Who is there ? ” A boy answered, “ Will, Sir.” —“ What are you doing ? ”—“ Nothing, Sir.”—“ Is Tom there ? ”—“ Yes,” says Tom. “ What are you doing, Tom ? ”—“ Helping Will, Sir.”

XXIV. LORD ROSS.

The reprobate Lord Ross, being on his death-bed, was desired by his chaplain to call on God. He replied, “ I will if I go that way, but I don’t believe I shall.”

XXV. ECCLESIASTIC SQUABBLE.

A vicar and curate of a village, where there was to be a burial, were at variance. The vicar not coming in time, the curate began the service, and was reading the words, “ I am the resurrection,” when the vicar arrived, almost

almost out of breath, and snatching the book out of the curate's hands, with great scorn, cried, “*You* the resurrection ! *I* am the resurrection,”—and then went on.

Nota. This, though copied from Mr. Walpole's own hand-writing, is suspected not to be very new. But even old jests, that such a man thought worthy of writing, or speaking, cannot be unworthy of a place in this lounging compilation ; and they often gained by passing through his hands.

XXVI. WEAK NERVES.

A clergyman at Oxford, who was very nervous and absent, going to read prayers at St. Mary's, heard a show-man in the High-street, who had an exhibition of wild beasts, repeat often, “Walk in without loss of time. All alive ! alive, ho !” The sounds struck the absent man, and ran in his head so much, that when he began to read the service, and came to the words in the first verse, “and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive,” he cried out, with a louder voice, “shall save his foul

Toul alive ! All alive ! alive, ho !” to the astonishment of the congregation.

XXVII. A CONVERT.

A Methodist in America, bragging how well he had instructed some Indians in religion, called up one of them, and, after some questions, asked him if he had not found great comfort last Sunday, after receiving the sacrament. “ Aye, master,” replied the savage, “ but I wished it had been brandy.”

XXVIII. AN IGNORANT COMMUNICANT.

An ignorant soldier at Quebec, observing some of his comrades stay behind him at church, asked them, on their coming out, what was the reason ? They told him jeeringly, that the parson had treated them with some wine. “ No other liquor ?” says the fellow. Seeing he swallowed the bait, they answered, that he might have what liquor he chose. Next Sunday he stayed to have his share ; and when the clergyman offered him the wine, he put up his hand to his head, in token of salutation, and said modestly,
“ Please

“ Please your reverence, I should prefer punch.”

XXIX. FRENCH BULL.

A married French lady, who had an intrigue, insisted on having her lover's portrait. He remonstrated on her absurdity, and said it would be proclaiming their amour. “ Oh,” said she, “ but to prevent a discovery, it shall not be drawn like you.”

XXX. COURT POLITESSE.

When Lord Townsend was secretary of state to George the First, some city dames came to visit his lady, with whom she was little acquainted. Meaning to be mighty civil, and return their visits, she asked one of them where she lived? The other replied, near Aldermanbury. “ Oh,” cried Lady Townsend, “ I hope the Alderman is well.”

XXXI. HOB AND NOB.

Some words are locally perverted to bad senses. *Hob* and *Nob* must be of the number.

Lord

Lord * * * being in the country, and wishing to shew great regard to a rustic gentleman of some influence, he was invited to dine, along with a numerous and elegant company, and placed at my lady's right hand. The lady, in the midst of dinner, called for a glass of wine to drink with her new guest, and holding it towards him, as then the fashion, said, “ Hob and nob, Mr. * * *. ” The gentleman stared, and blushed up to the eyes. She thinking it was mere timidity, repeated the words, and the gentleman looking if possible more confused, she coloured herself ; when he, after much hesitation, whispered, “ Madam, excuse me, but I never hob and nob except with my wife.”

XXXII. DUCHESS OF BOLTON.

The duchess dowager of Bolton, who was natural daughter to the duke of Monmouth, used to divert George the First, by affecting to make blunders. Once when she had been at the play of “ *Love's Last Shift*,” she called it, *La dernière Chemise de l'Amour*. Another time she pretended to come to court

in

in a great fright, and the king asking the cause, she said she had been at Mr. Whiston's, who told her the world would be burnt in three years; and for her part she was determined to go to China.

XXXIII. THE KING OF BULLS.

I will give you what I call the king of bulls. An Irish baronet, walking out with a gentleman, who told me the story, was met by his nurse, who requested charity. The baronet exclaimed vehemently, "I will give you nothing. You played me a scandalous trick in my infancy." The old woman, in amazement, asked him what injury she had done him? He answered, "I was a fine boy, and you changed me."

In this bull even personal identity is confounded!

XXXIV. CONVENIENT COURAGE.

A certain earl having beaten Antony Henley, at Tunbridge, for some impertinence, the next day found Henley beating another person. The peer congratulated Henley on

that acquisition of spirit. "Oh, my lord," replied Henley, "your lordship and I know whom to beat."

XXXV. LORD WILLIAM POULET.

Lord William Poulet, though often chairman of committees of the house of commons, was a great dunce, and could scarce read. Being to read a bill for naturalizing Jemima, duchess of Kent, he called her, Jeremiah, duchess of Kent.

Having heard South Walls commended for ripening fruit, he shewed all the four sides of his garden for south walls.

A gentleman writing to desire a fine horse he had, offered him any *equivalent*. Lord William replied, that the horse was at his service, but he did not know what to do with an *elephant*.

A pamphlet, called "*The Snake in the Grass*," being reported (probably in joke) to be written by this Lord William Poulet, a gentleman, abused in it, sent him a challenge. Lord William professed his innocence, and that he was not the author; but

the gentleman would not be satisfied without a denial under his hand. Lord William took a pen, and began, "This is to scratify, that the buk called the Snak"—"Oh, my lord," said the person, "I am satisfied; your lordship has already convinced me you did not write the book."

XXXVI. LETTER WRITTEN SOON AFTER
HORACE WALPOLE, BY THE DEATH OF
HIS NEPHEW, HAD SUCCEEDED TO THE
TITLE OF EARL OF ORFORD.

Berkley-square, Dec. 26, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

As I am sure of the sincirity of your congratulation, I feel much obliged by them; though what has happened destroys my tranquillity; and if what the world reckons advantages, could compensate the loss of peace and ease, would ill indemnify me, even by them. A small estate, loaded with debt, and of which I do not understand the management, and am too old to learn; a source of law-suits amongst my near relations, though not affecting me; endless conversations with lawyers;

lawyers; and packets of letters every day to read and answer: all this weight of business is too much for the rag of life that yet hangs about me; and was preceded by three weeks of anxiety about my unfortunate nephew, and a daily correspondence with physicians, and mad doctors, calling upon me when I had been out of order ever since July: such a mass of troubles made me very seriously ill for some days, and has left me, and still keeps me, so weak and dispirited, that if I shall not soon be able to get some repose, my poor head or body will not be able to resist. For the empty title, I trust you do not suppose it any thing but an incumbrance, by larding my busy mornings with idle visits of interruption, and which, when I am able to go out, I shall be forced to return. Surely no man of seventy-four, unless superannuated, can have the smallest pleasure in sitting at home in his own room, as I always do, and being called by a new name.

It will seem personal, and ungrateful too, to have said so much about my own *trifl* situation, and not to have yet thanked you,

C 2

Sir,

Sir, for your kind and flattering offer of letting me read what you have finished of your history; but it was necessary to expose my condition to you, before I could venture to accept your proposal, when I am so utterly incapable of giving a quarter of an hour at a time to what, I know by my acquaintance with your works, will demand all my attention, if I wish to reap the pleasure they are formed to give me. It is most true that, for these seven weeks, I have not redde seven pages, but letters, states of accounts, cases to be laid before lawyers, accounts of farms, &c. &c. and those subject to mortgages. Thus are my mornings occupied: in an evening my relations, and a very few friends, come to me; and when they are gone, I have about an hour, to midnight, to write answers to letters for the next day's post, which I had not time to do in the morning. This is actually my case now; I happened to be quitted at ten o'clock, and I would not lose the opportunity of thanking you, not knowing when I could command another hour.

I would by no means be understood to decline

decline your obliging offer, Sir. On the contrary, I accept it joyfully, if you can trust me with your manuscript for a little time, should I have leisure to read it but by small snatches, which would be wronging, and would break all connexion in my head. Criticism you are * — — — — and to read critically is far beyond my present power. Can a scrivener, or a scrivener's hearer, be a judge of composition, style, profound reasoning, and new lights, and discoveries, &c.? But my weary hand and breast must finish. May I ask the favour of your calling upon me any morning when you shall happen to come to town; you will find the new old lord exactly the same admirer of your's, and your obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

[It was a considerable time before he would sign *Orford*, or could even hear his style or title without hesitation.]

* An overstrained compliment is omitted.

XXXVII. HOURS OF COMPOSITION.

I wrote the “*Castle of Otranto*” in eight days, or rather eight nights; for my general hours of composition are from ten o’clock at night till two in the morning, when I am sure not to be disturbed by visitants. While I am writing I take several cups of coffee.

XXXVIII. HUME AND BURNET.

I am no admirer of Hume. In conversation he was very *thick*; and I do believe hardly understood a subject till he had written upon it.

Burnet I like much. It is observable, that none of his facts has been controverted, except his relation of the birth of the Pretender, in which he was certainly mistaken—but his very credulity is a proof of his honesty. Burnet’s style and manner are very interesting. It seems as if he had just come from the king’s closet, or from the apartments of the men whom he describes, and was telling his reader, in plain honest terms, what he had seen and heard.

XXXIX.

XXXIX. AUTHORS AND ARTISTS.

I have always rather tried to escape the acquaintance, and conversation, of authors. An author talking of his own works, or censoring those of others, is to me a dose of hypsecacuana. I like only a few, who can in company forget their authorship, and remember plain sense.

The conversation of artists is still worse. Vanity and envy are the main ingredients. One detests vanity because it shocks one's own vanity.

Had I listened to the censures of artists, there is not a good piece in my collection. One blames one part of a picture, another attacks another. Sir Joshua is one of the most candid; yet he blamed the stiff drapery of my Henry VII, in the state bed-chamber, as if good drapery could be expected in that age of painting.

XL. CAUTION TO YOUNG AUTHORS.

Youth is prone to censure. A young man of genius expects to make a world for

C 4 himself; .

himself; as he gets older, he finds he must take it as it is.

It is imprudent in a young author to make any enemies whatever. He should not attack any living person. Pope was, perhaps, too refined and jesuitic a professor of authorship; and his arts to establish his reputation were infinite, and sometimes perhaps exceeded the bounds of severe integrity. But in this he is an example of prudence, that he wrote no satire till his fortune was made.

XLI. PUBLIC VIRTUE.

When I first thrust my nose into the world, I was apt loudly to blame any defection from what I esteemed public virtue, or patriotism. As I grew older, I found the times were more to blame than the men. We may censure places and pensions; while the placemen and the pensioners are often intitled to our esteem. One man has a numerous family to provide for, another is ruled by a vain wife, &c. &c. I think some temptations would have overcome even Brutus.

tus. But why talk of Brutus, while men not measures are the object?

XLII. GEORGE THE FIRST.

I do remember something of George the First. My father took me to St. James's while I was a very little boy; after waiting some time in an anti-room, a gentleman came in all dressed in brown, even his stockings; and with a ribbon and star. He took me up in his arms, kissed me, and chatted some time.

XLIII. LIKENESS IN ANTIQUE PORTRAITS.

On looking at the bust of Marcus Antoninus, in the gallery at Strawberry Hill, Mr. Walpole observed that even the worst artists among the ancients always hit the character and likeness; which the best of ours seldom, or never, do.

This is a problem worthy of ample discussion, in a country fond of portraits. Had the ancients any particular mode, or machine;

chine; or was it the pure effect of superior genius?

XLIV. PORTRAITS.

I prefer portraits, really interesting, not only to landscape-painting, but to history. A landscape is, we will say, an exquisite distribution of wood and water, and buildings. It is excellent—we pass on, and it leaves not one trace in the memory. In historical painting there may be *sublime deception*—but it not only always falls short of the idea, but is always *false*; that is, has the greatest blemish incidental to history. It is commonly false in the *costume*; generally in the portraits; always in the grouping and attitudes, which the painter, if not present, cannot possibly delineate as they really were. Call it fabulous-painting, and I have no objection.—But a real portrait we know is truth itself: and it calls up so many collateral ideas, as to fill an intelligent mind more than any other species.

XLV. AUTHORS IN FLOWER—MYSTERIOUS MOTHER.

At Strawberry Hill, 19th Sept. 1784, Mr. Walpole remarked that, at a certain time of their lives, men of genius seemed to be *in flower*. Gray was in flower three years, when he wrote his odes, &c. This starting the idea of the American aloe, some kinds of which are said to flower only once in a century, he observed, laughing, that had Gray lived a hundred years longer, perhaps he would have been in flower again. Sir Charles Hanbury Williams bore only one blossom; he was in flower only for one ode.

Next evening, about eleven o'clock, Mr. Walpole gave me the Mysterious Mother to read, while he went to Mrs Clive's for an hour or two. The date was remarkable, as the play hinges on an anniversary *twentieth of September*.

—but often as returns

The twentieth of September, &c.

This odd circumstance conspired with the complete solitude of the Gothic apartments,
to

to lend an additional impression to the superstitious parts of that tragedy. In point of language, and the true expression of passion and feeling, the new and just delineation of monastic fraud, tyranny, and cruelty ; it deserves the greatest praise. But it is surprising that a man of his taste and judgment should have added to the improbability of the tale, instead of mellowing it with softer shades. This might be cured by altering one page of the countess's confession in the last act.—The story, as told in Luther's *Table Talk*, seems more ancient than that in the *Tales of the Queen of Navarre*.

On Mr. Walpole's return, he said he had printed a few copies of this tragedy at Strawberry Hill, to give to his friends. Some of them falling into improper hands, two surreptitious editions were advertised. Mr. W. in consequence desired Dod sley to print an edition 1781, and even caused it to be advertised. But finding that the stolen impressions were of course dropped, he ordered his not to be issued, and none were ever sold.

XLVI. GRAY'S POLITICS.

I never rightly understood Mr. Gray's political opinions. Sometimes he seemed to incline to the side of authority; sometimes to that of the people.

This is indeed natural to an ingenuous and candid mind. When a portion of the people shews gross vices, or idle sedition, arising from mere ignorance or prejudice; one wishes it checked by authority. When the governors pursue wicked plans, or weak measures, one wishes a spirited opposition by the people at large.

XLVII. DR. ROBERTSON.

Dr. Robertson called on me t'other day. We talked of some political affairs; and he concluded his opinion with, "for you must know, sir, that I look upon myself as a moderate whig." My answer was, "Yes, doctor, I look on you as a *very* moderate whig."

XLVIII. BRITISH EMPIRE.

We now talk of the British *empire*, and of
Titus

Titus and Trajan, who were absolute emperors. In my time it was the British *monarchy*. What is this mighty empire over ten or twelve millions of people, and a few trading colonies? People shut up in an island have always pride enough—but this is too ridiculous even for flattery to invent, and the absolute power of a Roman emperor to swallow, along with an apotheosis.

XLIX. DON QUIXOTTE.

Don Quixotte is no favourite of mine. When a man is once so mad, as to mistake a wind-mill for a giant, what more is to be said, but an insipid repetition of mistakes, or an uncharacteristic deviation from them?

[This judgment was surely too harsh. It is the minute description of life and character, as they occur in Spain, that interests us in reading Don Quixotte, and make us pardon the extravagance of the chief character, and the insipidity of the pastoral scenes. The episodes are bad; except the tale of the Spanish captive and his Moorish mistress, which is wrought up with great truth and nature.]

L. VOLTAIRE.

Soon after I had published my “Historic Doubts on the reign of Richard III.” Voltaire happening to see and like the book, sent me a letter, mentioning how much the work answered his ideas concerning the uncertainty of history, as expressed in his *Histoire Générale*. He added many praises of my book; and concluded with entreating my *amitié*.

As I had, in the preface to the Castle of Otranto, ridiculed Voltaire’s conduct towards Shakspere, I thought it proper first to send Voltaire that book; and let him understand that, if after perusing it, he persisted in offering me his *amitié*, I had no objections, but should esteem myself honoured by the friendship of so great a man.

Some time after I received from my acquaintance the Duchess of Choiseul, at Paris, a letter, inclosing one from Voltaire to her, wherein he said that I had sent him a book, in the preface to which he was loaded with reproaches, and all on account *de son Bouffon*
de

*de Shakespeare**. He stated nothing of the real transaction, but only mentioned the sending of the Castle of Otranto, as if this had been the very first step.

L1. NEW IDEA OF A NOVEL.

I am firmly convinced that a story might be written, of which *all* the incidents should appear supernatural, yet turn out natural.

[This remark was made in 1784.]

LII. COALS TO NEWCASTLE.

The chief apprehension of the Duke of Newcastle, (the minister), was that of catching cold. Often in the heat of summer the debates, in the House of Lords, would stand still, till some window were shut, in consequence of the Duke's orders. The Peers would all be melting in sweat, that the Duke might not catch cold.

When sir Joseph Yorke was ambassador at the Hague, a curious instance happened of this idle apprehension. The late King going to Hanover, the Duke must go with him,

* Of his buffoon Shakespeare.

that

that his foes might not injure him in his absence. The day they were to pass the sea, a messenger came, at five o'clock in the morning, and drew Sir Joseph's bed curtains. Sir Joseph starting, asked what was the matter. The man said he came from the Duke of Newcastle. "For God's sake," exclaimed Sir Joseph, "what is it? Is the King ill?" No. After several fruitless questions, the messenger at length said, "The Duke sent me to see you in bed, for in this bed he means to sleep."

LIII. TWO MINISTERS.

Mr. Pitt's plan, when he had the gout, was to have no fire in his room, but to load himself with bed-clothes. At his house at Hayes he slept in a long room; at one end of which was his bed, and his lady's at the other. His way was, when he thought the Duke of Newcastle had fallen into any mistake, to send for him, and read him a lecture. The Duke was sent for once, and came, when Mr. Pitt was confined to bed by the gout. There was, as usual, no fire in the

D

room;

room ; the day was very chilly, and the Duke, as usual, afraid of catching cold. The Duke first sat down on Mrs. Pitt's bed, as the warmest place ; then drew up his legs into it, as he got colder. The lecture unluckily continuing a considerable time, the Duke at length fairly lodged himself under Mrs. Pitt's bed-clothes. A person, from whom I had the story, suddenly going in, saw the two ministers in bed, at the two ends of the room, while Pitt's long nose, and black beard unshaved for some days, added to the grotesque of the scene.

LIV. DR. JOHNSON.

I cannot imagine that Dr. Johnson's reputation will be very lasting. His dictionary is a surprising work for one man—but sufficient examples in foreign countries shew that the task is too much for one man, and that a society should alone pretend to publish a standard dictionary. In Johnson's dictionary, I can hardly find any thing I look for. It is full of words no where else to be found ; and wants numerous words occurring in good authors.

thors. In writing it is useful; as if one be doubtful in the choice of a word, it displays the authorities for its usage.

His essays I detest. They are full of what I call *triptology*, or repeating the same thing thrice over, so that three papers to the same effect might be made out of any one paper in the Rambler. He must have had a bad heart—his story of the sacrilege in his voyage to the Western Islands of Scotland is a lamentable instance.

LV. PHYSIOGNOMY.

Lavater, in his Physiognomy, says that Lord Anson, from his countenance, must have been a very wise man. He was one of the most stupid men I ever knew.

LVI. INDOLENCE.

When the Duke of Newcastle left the ministry, a whole closet of American dispatches was found unopened.

LVII. MILTON.

If Milton had written in Italian he would have been, in my opinion, the most perfect

D 2 poet

poet in modern languages; for his own strength of thought would have condensed and hardened that speech to a proper degree.

LVIII. MARY QUEEN OF SCOTLAND.

I cannot think that the letter from Mary Queen of Scotland to Elizabeth, about the amours of the latter, is genuine. I suppose it a forgery of Burleigh, to shew Elizabeth, if she had refused to condemn Mary.

It was the interest of Queen Elizabeth's ministers to put Mary to death, 1. as they had gone too far against her to hope for mercy; and, 2. to secure a protestant succession. The above letter was published by Haynes, among the Cecil Papers preserved at Hatfield House. His compilation is executed without judgment.

I have read the apologies for Mary; but still must believe her guilty of her husband's death. So much of the advocate, so many suppositions, appear in those long apologies, that they shew of themselves that plain truth can hardly be on that side. Suppose her guilty, and all is easy: there is no longer a labyrinth,

labyrinth, and a clue:—all is in the highway of human affairs.

LIX. BRIBERY.

If you look into the last volumes of the *Memoires de Villars*, you will find minutes of the French council, whence it appears that Fleury was accused of taking money from England, at a time when it was alleged that my father was bribed by France. The origin of this mighty charge was, that Sir Robert Walpole had indorsed a bill of 500l. to a linen-draper in the Strand, with the sole view of serving that linen-draper.

LX. MINISTERS OF GEORGE THE SECOND.

The ministries of George the Second were all whig. The opposition consisted of old whigs, such as Rushout, and others; of Jacobites, such as Sir William Wyndham, and Shippens.

Sir Robert Walpole said, “some are corrupt; but I will tell you of one who is not. Shippens is not.” When Shippens came to take the oath of allegiance, Sir Robert Wal-

pole was at the board. Shippen had a trick of holding his glove to his mouth, and did so when repeating the oath. Sir Robert pulled down his hand. Shippen said, "Robin, that is not fair."

New whigs in the minority, because out of the ministry, were Pulteney, formerly joined in the administration with Sir Robert Walpole; Lyttelton, whose father was a true whig; and Pitt.

LXI. EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

Farce.

"Mr. O'Keefe has brought our audiences to bear with extravagance; and were there not such irresistible humour in his utmost daring, it would be impossible to deny that he has passed even beyond the limits of nonsense — but I confine this approbation to his *Agreeable Surprise*. In his other pieces there is much more untempered nonsense than humour. Even that favourite performance I wondered that Mr. Colman dared to produce."

LXII. *Dramatic*

LXII. *Dramatic Characters.*

" Your remark, that a piece full of marked characters would be void of nature, is most just. This is so strongly my opinion, that I thought it a great fault in Miss Burney's *Cecilia*, though it has a thousand other beauties, that she has laboured far too much to make all her personages talk always in character. Whereas, in the present refined, or depraved, state of human nature, most people endeavour to conceal their real character, not to display it. A professional man, as a pedantic Fellow of a College, or a Seaman, has a characteristic dialect; but that is very different from continually *letting out* his ruling passion."

LXIII. *Song-writing.*

" I have no more talent for writing a song, than for writing an ode like Dryden's or Gray's. It is a talent *per se*, and given, like every other branch of genius, by Nature alone. Poor Shenstone was labouring through his whole life to write a perfect song

D 4 —and,

—and, in my opinion at least, never succeeded—not better than Pope did in a St. Cecilian ode. I doubt not whether we have not gone a long, long way beyond the possibility of writing a good song. All the words in the language have been so often employed on simple images (without which a song cannot be good); and such reams of bad verses have been produced in that kind; that I question whether true simplicity itself could please now. At least we are not likely to have any such thing. Our present choir of Poetic Virgins write in the other extreme. They colour their compositions so highly with choice and dainty phrases, that their own dresses are not more fantastic and romantic. Their nightingales make as many divisions as Italian singers.—But this is wandering from the subject: and while I only meant to tell you what I could not do myself, I am telling you what others do ill.”

LXIV. *Poetic Epochs.*

“ I will yet hazard one other opinion, though relative to composition in general. There

There are two periods favourable to poets—a rude age, when a genius may hazard any thing, and when nothing has been forestalled. The other is, when, after ages of barbarism and incorrection, a master or two produce models formed by purity and taste. Virgil, Horace, Boileau, Corneille, Racine, Pope, exploded the licentiousness that reigned before them. What happened? Nobody dared to write in contradiction to the severity established; and very few had the abilities to rival their masters. Insipidity ensues:—novelty is dangerous:—and bombast usurps the throne, which had been debased by a race of *Faineants.*"

LXV. *Criticism.*

" It is prudent to consult others before one ventures on publication—but every single person is as liable to be erroneous as an author. An elderly man, as he gains experience, acquires prejudices too: nay, old age has generally two faults—it is too quick-sighted into the faults of the time being; and too blind to the faults that reigned in his own youth; which having partaken of, or
having

having admired, though injudiciously, he recollects with complaisance."

LVI. *Dramatic Composition.*

" I confess too that there must be two distinct views in writers for the stage; one of which is more allowable to them than to other authors. The one is *durable fame*—the other, peculiar to dramatic authors, *the view of writing to the present taste* (and perhaps, as you say, to the level of the audience). I do not mean for the sake of profit—but even high comedy must risk a little of its immortality by consulting the ruling taste. And thence a comedy always loses some of its beauties, the transient—and some of its intelligibility. Like its harsher sister, Satire, many of its allusions must vanish, as the objects it aims at correcting cease to be in vogue—and perhaps that cessation, the natural death of fashion, is often ascribed by an author to his own reproofs. Ladies would have left off patching on the whig or tory side of their face, though Mr. Addison had not written his excellent *Spectator*. Probably

bly even they who might be corrected by his reprimand adopted some new distinction as ridiculous; not discovering that his satire was levelled at their partial animosity, and not at the mode of placing their patches—for, unfortunately, as the world cannot be cured of being foolish, a preacher who eradicates one folly, does but make room for some other.”

LXVII. TRAGEDY AND COMEDY.

The critics generally consider a tragedy as the next effort of the mind to an epic poem. For my part, I estimate the difficulty of writing a good comedy to be greater than that of composing a good tragedy. Not only equal genius is required, but a comedy demands a more uncommon assemblage of qualities—knowledge of the world, wit, good sense, &c.; and these qualities superadded to those requisite for tragical composition.

Congreve is said to have written a comedy at eighteen. It may be—for I cannot say that he has any characteristic of a comic writer, except wit, which may sparkle bright at that age. His characters are seldom *genuine*

nuine

nuine—and his plots are sometimes fitter for tragedy. Mr. Sheridan is one of the most perfect comic writers I know, and unites the most uncommon qualities—his plots are sufficiently deep, without the clumsy intanglement, and muddy profundity, of Congreve—characters strictly in nature—wit without affectation. What talents! The complete orator in the senate, or in Westminster-hall—and the excellent dramatist in the most difficult province of the drama!

LXVIII. OMISSIONS NOT ALWAYS LAPSES.

Lord **** did a shocking job, for which my father was blamed. There is a silly and false account of it; in the last edition of the Biographia, in a life of him by Bishop ****, his son. I had forgotten Lord **** in the Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors: when this was observed to me I waited on Lord ****, his son, and begged a list of his father's works, apologizing at the same time for the omission. His lordship said, "Sir, I beg you will not mention my father." He was conscious that it was a delicate matter to mention him.

LXIX. IMPOSITIONS.

Acute and sensible people are often the most easily deceived. A deceit, of which it may be said, “ It is impossible for any one to dare it,” always succeeds.

LXX. REVOLUTIONS.

Good men are never concerned in revolutions, because they will not go the lengths. Sunderland caused the revolution of 1688, while Devonshire stood aloof—the latter was the angel, the former the storm. Bad men, and poisonous plants, are sometimes of superlative use in skilful hands.

LXXI. APPLAUSE THE NURSE OF GENIUS.

One quality I may safely arrogate to myself: I am not *afraid to praise*. Many are such timid judges of composition, that they hesitate, and wait for the public opinion. Shew them a manuscript, though they highly approve it in their hearts, they are afraid to commit themselves by speaking out. Several excellent works have perished from this cause;

a writer

a writer of real talents being often a mere sensitive plant with regard to his own productions. Some cavils of Mason (how inferior a poet and judge!) had almost induced Gray to destroy his two beautiful and sublime odes. We should not only praise, but hasten to praise.

LXXII. FRENCH TRAGEDY.

I have printed at Strawberry Hill the *Cornelie Vestale*, a tragedy by the president Henault. It is rather a dramatic poem than a drama—like the other French tragedies. The word *drama* is derived, I believe, from a Greek word signifying *to act*. Now, in the French tragedies, there is little or no *action*; and they are, in truth, mere dramatic poems, composed wholly of conflicts of interests, passions, and sentiments; expressed, not in the language of nature, but in that of declamation. Hence these interests, passions, and sentiments, seem all overstrained, and *hors de la nature*.

I do not mean to deny just praise to Corneille and Racine—but their merit, like that

of Metastasio's Operas, is of a peculiar kind. It is not *dramatic*, not pity and terror moved by incident and *action*—but an interest created by perplexity, mental conflict, and situation. An Italian, an Englishman, a German, expects something very different in a *drama*, real action, and frequent incident.

LXXXIII. ON GRACE IN COMPOSITION.

A LETTER.

June 26, 1785.

To your book, Sir, I am much obliged on many accounts, particularly for having recalled my mind to subjects of delight, to which it was grown dulled by age and indolence. In consequence of your reclaiming it, I asked myself whence you feel so much disregard for certain authors whose fame is established. You have assigned good reasons for withholding your approbation from some, on the plea of their being imitators—it was natural then, to ask myself again, whence they had obtained so much celebrity? I think I have discovered a cause, which I do not remember to have seen noted; and that cause

cause I suspect to have been, that certain of those authors possessed *grace*—do not take me for a disciple of Lord Chesterfield, nor imagine that I mean to erect grace into a capital ingredient of writing—but I do believe that it is a perfume that will preserve from putrefaction; and is distinct even from style, which regards *expression*; grace I think belongs to *manner*. It is from the charm of grace that I believe some authors, not in your favour, obtained part of their renown. Virgil in particular—and yet I am far from disagreeing with you on his subject in general. There is such a dearth of invention in the *Æneid* [and when he did invent, it was often so foolishly]; so little good sense, so little variety, and so little power over the passions, that I have frequently said, from contempt for his matter, and from the charm of his harmony, that I believe I should like his poem better, if I was to hear it repeated, and did not understand Latin. On the other hand, he has more than harmony; whatever he utters is said gracefully, and he enables his images, especially in the *Georgics*, or at least

least it is more sensible there from the humility of the subject. A Roman farmer might not understand his diction in agriculture—but he made a Roman courtier understand farming, the farming of that age; and could captivate a lord of Augustus's bed-chamber, and tempt him to listen to themes of rusticity. Statius and Claudian, though talking of war, would make a soldier despise them as bullies. That graceful manner of thinking in Virgil seems to me to be more than style, if I do not refine too much; and I admire, I confess, Mr. Addison's phrase, that Virgil tossed about his dung with an air of majesty. A style may be excellent without grace—for instance, Dr. Swift's. Eloquence may bestow an immortal style, and one of more dignity; yet eloquence may want that ease, that genteel air that flows from, or constitutes, grace. Addison himself was master of that grace, even in his pieces of humour, and which do not owe their merit to style; and from that combined secret he excels all men that ever lived, but Shakespeare, in humour, by never drop-

E ping

ping into an approach towards burlesque and buffoonery, even when his humour descended to characters that, in any other hands, would have been vulgarly low. Is it not clear that Will Whimble was a gentleman, though he always lived at a distance from good company? Fielding had as much humour perhaps as Addison; but having no idea of grace, is perpetually disgusting. His innkeepers and parsons are the grossest of their profession; and his gentlemen are awkward when they should be at their ease.

The Grecians had grace in every thing, in poetry, in oratory, in statuary, in architecture, and probably in music and painting. The Romans, it is true, were their imitators; but having grace too, imparted it to their copies, which gave them a merit, that almost raises them to the rank of originals. Horace's Odes acquired their fame, no doubt, from the graces of his manner, and purity of his style; the chief praise of Tibullus and Propertius, who certainly cannot boast of more meaning than Horace's Odes.

Waller, whom you proscribe, Sir, owed

his reputation to the graces of his manner, though he frequently stumbled, and even fell flat: but a few of his small pieces are as graceful as possible: one might say, that he excelled in painting ladies in enamel, but could not succeed in portraits in oil large as life. Milton had such superior merit, that I will only say, that if his Angels, his Satan, and his Adam, have as much dignity as the Apollo Belvedere, his Eve has all the delicacy and graces of the Venus of Medici, as his description of Eden has the colouring of Albano. Milton's tenderness imprints ideas as graceful as Guido's Madonnas; and the Allegro, Penserofo, and Comus, might be denoted from the three Graces; as the Italians give singular titles to two or three of Petrarch's best sonnets.

Cowley, I think, would have had grace (for his mind was graceful) if he had had any ear, or if his taste had not been vitiated by the pursuit of wit; which, when it does not offer itself naturally, degenerates into tinsel or pertness. Pertness is the mistaken affectation of grace, as pedantry produces

E 2 erroneous

erroneous dignity ; the familiarity of the one, and the clumsiness of the other, distort, or prevent, grace. Nature, that furnishes samples of all qualities, and in the scale of gradation exhibits all possible shades, affords us types that are more apposite than words. The eagle is sublime, the lion majestic, the swan graceful, the monkey pert, the bear ridiculously awkward. I mention these as more expressive and comprehensive than I could make definitions of my meaning ; but I will apply the swan only, under whose wings I will shelter an apology for Racine, whose pieces give me an idea of that bird. The colouring of the swan is pure, his attitudes are graceful, he never displeases you when sailing on his proper element. His feet may be ugly, his notes hissing, not musical, his walk not natural ; he can soar, but it is with difficulty. Still the impression the swan leaves is that of grace—so does Racine.

Boileau may be compared to the dog, whose sagacity is remarkable, as well as its fawning on its master, and its snarling at those it dislikes. If Boileau was too austere
to

to admit the pliability of grace, he compensates by sense and propriety. He is like (for I will drop animals) an upright magistrate whom you respect; but whose justice and severity leave an awe, that discourages familiarity. His copies of the ancients may be too servile—but if a good translator deserve praise, Boileau deserves more: he certainly does not fall below his originals; and, considering at what period he wrote, has greater merit still. By his imitations he held out to his countrymen models of taste, and banished totally the bad taste of his predecessors. For his Lutrin, replete with excellent poetry, wit, humour, and satire, he certainly was not obliged to the ancients. Excepting Horace, how little idea had either Greeks or Romans of wit and humour! Aristophanes and Lucian, compared with moderns, were, the one a blackguard, the other a buffoon. In my eyes, the Lutrin, the Dispensary, and the Rape of the Lock, are standards of grace and elegance, not to be paralleled by antiquity; and eternal reproaches to Voltaire, whose indecency in the Pucelle degraded him as

much, when compared with the three authors I have named, as his Henriade leaves Virgil, and even Lucan, whom he more resembles, by far his superiors. The Dunciad is blemished by the offensive images of the games, but the poetry appears to me admirable; and though the fourth book has obscurities, I prefer it to the three others. It has descriptions not surpassed by any poet that ever existed; and which surely a writer merely ingenious will never equal. The lines on Italy, on Venice, on Convents, have all the grace for which I contend, as distinct from poetry, though united with the most beautiful; and the Rape of the Lock, besides the originality of great part of the invention, is a standard of graceful writing.

In general, I believe that what I call *grace*, is denominated elegance; but by grace I mean something higher. I will explain myself by instances; Apollo is graceful, Mercury elegant.

Petrarch perhaps owed his whole merit to the harmony of his numbers, and the graces of his style. They conceal his poverty of meaning,

meaning, and want of variety. His complaints too may have added an interest, which, had his passion been successful, - and had expressed itself with equal sameness, would have made the number of his sonnets insupportable. Melancholy in poetry, I am inclined to think, contributes to grace, when it is not disgraced by pitiful lamentations, such as Ovid's and Cicero's in their banishments. We respect melancholy, because it imparts a similar affection, pity. A gay writer, who should only express satisfaction without variety, would soon be nauseous.

Madame de Sevigné shines both in grief and gaiety. There is too much of sorrow for her daughter's absence; yet it is always expressed by new turns, new images; and often by wit, whose tenderness has a melancholy air. When she forgets her concern, and returns to her natural disposition, gaiety, every paragraph has novelty: her allusions, her applications, are the happiest possible. She has the art of making you acquainted with all her acquaintance; and attaches you even to the spots she inhabited. Her lan-

guage is correct, though unstudied; and when her mind is full of any great event, she interests you with the warmth of a dramatic writer, not with the chilling impartiality of an historian. Pray read her accounts of the death of Turenne and of the arrival of King James in France, and tell me whether you do not know their persons, as if you had lived at the time. For my part, if you will allow me a word of digression (not that I have written with any method), I hate the cold impartiality recommended to historians; *si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi*—but that I may not wander again, nor tire, nor contradict you any more, I will finish now; and shall be glad if you will dine at Strawberry-Hill next Sunday, and take a bed there; when I will tell you how many more parts of your book have pleased me, than have startled my opinions, or, perhaps, prejudices.

I am, Sir, your obedient, humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. Be so good as to let me know, by a line by the post to Strawberry-Hill, whether I shall have the pleasure of seeing you on Sunday.

LXXIV. ANECDOTES OF THE STREETS.

There is a French book called *Anecdotes des Rues de Paris*. I had begun a similar work, “Anecdotes of the Streets of London.” I intended, in imitation of the French original, to have pointed out the streets and houses where any remarkable incident had happened. But I found the labour would be too great, in collecting materials from various resources: and I abandoned the design, after having written about ten or twelve pages.

LXXV. BONS-MOTS.

I have made a collection of the witty sayings of Charles II. I have also a collection of bons-mots, by people who only said one witty thing in the whole course of their lives.

Charles II. hearing a high character of a preacher in the country, attended one of his sermons. Expressing his dissatisfaction, one of the courtiers replied, that the preacher was applauded to the skies by his congregation. “Aye,” observed the King, “I suppose his nonsense suits their nonsense.”

LXXVI.

LXXVI. SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

George the First did not understand English. George the Second spoke the language pretty well, but with a broad German accent. My father “brushed up his old Latin,” to use a phrase of Queen Elizabeth, in order to converse with the first Hanoverian sovereign: and ruled both kings in spite of even their mistresses.

LXXVII. GEORGE I.

I can tell you, from unquestionable authority, a remarkable fact generally suspected, but not accurately known. The count Koningsmark, who assassinated Mr. Thynne in Pall-mall, afterwards became an admirer of the wife of the Electoral Prince of Hanover, who was to succeed to the English throne by the style of George I. The prince was often absent in the army, and Koningsmark was suspected to have occupied his place. The Elector being enraged at the real or supposed insult, ordered Koningsmark to be strangled. When George II. made his first journey to Hanover, he ordered some
pairs

pairs in the palace, and the body was found under the floor of the princess's dressing-room.

It is supposed the first cause of suspicion arose from Koningsmark's hat being found in the apartment of the princess. Dr. Hoadley, in his "Suspicious Husband," introduces a similar incident while the lady remains immaculate. This pleased George the Second, who was convinced of his mother's innocence. It is whimsical that this prince often expressed his anger by throwing down his hat, and kicking it about the room.

George I. was, however, separated from his wife; and there was no queen in his reign. He had two mistresses. One was Miss Schulenberg, afterwards created Duchess of Kendal, a tall, thin gawky. The other was the Countess of Platen, who was created Countess of Darlington; and who, for size, might have been compared to an elephant and castle. This couple of rabbits occasioned much jocularity on their first importation.

LXXVIII. UNIVERSITIES.

King William asked Mr. Locke how long
he

he thought the revolution principles might last in England. The philosopher answered, “Till this generation shall have passed away, and our universities shall have had time to breed a new one.” Many things I disapprove in our universities, where the country gentlemen are educated in toryism by tory clergy.

LXXIX. HISTORY.

Smollett’s History of England was written in two years, and is very defective.

Thinking to amuse my father once, after his retirement from the ministry, I offered to read a book of history. “Any thing but history,” said he, “for history must be false.”

LXXX. STYLE.

With regard to style, I think Addison far inferior to Dryden—and Swift is much more correct.

Every newspaper is now written in a good style. When I am consulted about style, I often say, “Go to the chandler’s shop for a style.”

Our common conversation is now in a good

good style. When this is the case, by the natural progress of knowledge, writers are apt to think they must distinguish themselves by an uncommon style—hence elaborate stiffness, and quaint brilliance. Had the authors of the silver age of Rome written just as they conversed, their works would have vied with those of the golden age. What a prodigious labour an author often takes to destroy his own reputation ! As in old prints with curious flowered borders, uncommon industry is exerted—only to ruin the effect.

LXXXI. FAME.

Much of reputation depends on the period in which it arises. The Italians proverbially observe, that one *half* of fame depends on that cause. In dark periods, when talents appear, they shine like the sun through a small hole in the window-shutter. The strong beam dazzles amid the surrounding gloom. Open the shutters, and the general diffusion of light attracts no notice.

LXXXII. TRIFLES.

Literature has many revolutions. If an author

author could arise from the dead, after a hundred years, what would be his surprise at the adventures of his own works ! I often say, “ Perhaps my books may be published in Paternoster-Row.”

The name of *Horatio* I dislike. It is theatrical ; and not English. I have, ever since I was a youth, written and subscribed *Horace*, an English name for an Englishman. In all my books (and perhaps you will think of the *numerosus Horatius*) I so spell my name.

I always retain the *To* on my letters, and I think the omission an impropriety. The mere name is too naked, while the old addresses were too prolix. We do not now address an Earl as “ Right Honourable ;” the bare title is thought more than “ right” honourable.

LXXXIII. BISHOP HOADLEY.

Bishop Hoadley was a true whig. He once preached a sermon on the anniversary of the Restoration, and printed it with this witty title, “ The Restoration no Blessing without the Revolution.” He used to express great contempt

contempt for the universities; and observed, as an instance of their great progress in learning, that the one had published Shakespear, and the other Hudibras *.

LXXXIV. SECRET SERVICES.

I observe that Sir John Sinclair, in his book on the revenue, builds much on Bolingbroke's assertions, which, as proofs, amount to nothing.

Some have confidently asserted, that Sir Robert Walpole's large secret service money went to newspapers; while, in fact, it was necessary in order to fix this family on the throne. Lord Orrery, secretary to the Pretender, had a pension from Sir Robert Walpole of two thousand pounds a year. The lord, his successor, who wrote the life of Swift, took Lord Orford aside in the House of Peers, and told him he had made strange discoveries in his father's papers. "Aye," said Lord Orford, "but the less you speak of that, the better. You are an honest man, and that is enough."

* Hanmer's and Dr. Grey's.

LXXXV. FACTION CONFUTED BY FACTS.

It was not Lord Bath, but Lord Egmont, who wrote the famous pamphlet, “Faction confuted by Facts.”

LXXXVI. PRINCESS DOWAGER OF WALES.

The king had quarrelled with Bute before he came to the throne; it was his mother, the princess dowager, who forced her son to employ that nobleman. I am as much convinced of an amorous connexion between B. and the P. D. as if I had seen them together.

The P. D. was a woman of strong mind. When she was very ill, she would order her carriage, and drive about the streets, to shew that she was alive. The K. and Q. used to go and see her every evening at eight o'clock; but when she got worse they went at seven, pretending they mistook the hour. The night before her death they were with her from seven to nine. She kept up the conversation as usual, went to bed, and was found dead in the morning. She died of the evil, which quite consumed her.

LXXXVII.

LXXXVII. MISCELLANEOUS ANTIQUITIES.

Here is a list of curious articles, which I intended for other Numbers of my Miscellaneous Antiquities, if that publication had been encouraged.

1. Original Remonstrance from General Monk to King Charles II. concerning the Plan of Government he was to follow, 1660.
2. Co. Letter from Mr. William Neve to Sir Thomas Holland, touching the Death and Funeral of James I.
3. Co. Singular Letter from Sir John Stanhope, 17 April, 1597; a specimen of the court bribery of the times.
4. Co. Letter from the Duchess of Cleveland to King Charles II. from the original in Lord Berkshire's hands, Paris 1678.
5. Co. Nine Letters from the celebrated Earl of Rochester to his Countess.
6. Description of a curious MS. temp. H. VI.; with a French Poem addressed by the Earl of Shrewsbury to that king's queen.
7. (Printed Tract.) A Relation of Lord Nottingham's Embassy to Spain 1604, by F Robert

Robert Treswell, Somerset Herald, 1605,
4to.

8. Co. The Bee, a Poem, by the Earl of Essex, 1598.

9. A Letter of News from T. Cromwell, 1634.

10. Co. A singular Letter from a rich Heireſ upon her Marriage.

11. (Printed Tract.) A Masque; in which Prince Charles acted, 1636.

12. Extracts concerning the Wardrobe of Edward II.

13. Co. of a long and curious Letter of Father Peter, Confessor of James II. to Father La Chaise, Confessor of Lewis XIV. on the State of Affairs in England, dated 1st March, 1687.

14. Original Letter of Oliver Cromwell to his Wife, after the Battle of Dunbar, 1650.

15. Co. Letter from Sir Edward Herbert, Father of Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

16. Co. Singular Letter from Sir Symonds d'Ewes, 1625.

17. Relation of the Duke of Buckingham's

ham's Entertainment in France 1671, and some Notes, &c. by Lord Clarendon.—A most remarkable account of the murder of Lady Leicester by her Lord.

18. Co. Letters from Queen Mary to Lady Russell, Widow of Lord Russell, from the Originals in the Possession of the Duke of Bedford.

19. Original Letter from Queen Katherine Par, the Year she died, 1548, to the Lord High Admiral Seymour, her Husband.

20. Letter from Lady Hastings to Cardinal Pole.

21. Original Letter from Lady Huntingdon to Cardinal Pole.

22. Another Original Letter to Cardinal Pole.

23. The Original Expence Book of the Marquis of Buckingham, the most magnificent Peer of his Time, 1622 and seq. as kept by his Treasurer. (From this large volume only extracts should be made.)

LXXXVIII. LIFE OF MRS. BELLAMY.

I have been reading a book called Mrs. Bellamy's Apology for her Life. To my

certain knowledge one half of it is false ; and I therefore believe the whole is in the like predicament.

LXXXIX. JUNIUS.

I was informed, by Sir John Irwine, that one day, when he was at Mr. Grenville's, Mr. G. told Sir John, that he had that morning received a letter from Junius, saying, that he esteemed Mr. G. and might soon make himself known to him. This affords me proof positive that the celebrated author of those letters could not be Mr. Grenville's secretary, as was reported *.

I really

* Mr. Almon's recent discovery on this topic, in his usual inaccurate way of *ipse dixit*, without any reference or authority, *may* be the truth, but is certainly very improbable. A young Irishman, author of the Letters of Junius! This embryo Burke would infallibly have been produced in public life, as his talents deserved. The masculine maturity of the style indicates an experienced writer. The *tone* is that of a man conversant in public affairs. Why die in an obscure situation, in the East Indies, when a mere discovery of his own secret would have insured fame and fortune? *Incredulus odi.* The *whig* resembles the style of Junius—but how many successful imitations of his style have appeared ! It is

easy

I really suspect Single-speech Hamilton to have been the author, from the following circumstance. One day, at a house, where he happened to be, he repeated the contents of that day's Junius; while, in fact, the printer had delayed the publication till next day. Hamilton was also brought forward by Lord Holland; and it is remarkable, that Lord Holland, though very open to censure, is not once mentioned.

Garrick, dining with me, told me, that, having been at Woodfall's, he learned that the Junius of that day would be the last. Upon which, hurrying to St. James's, he reported this intelligence to several people. Next day he received a letter from Junius, informing him that, if he used such freedoms, a letter to him should appear. From this Garrick concluded that the author was about the court.

easy to ape any style—but to found a new style of singular force and dignity is a different matter!

Among mere conjectures, the following may have its place. The title is, “The Letters of Junius. *Stat nominis umbra.*” Junius is the *umbra*, the translation, of Young only. Nor can the motto refer to the *state*, then in an acme of splendour.

XC. BOLINGBROKE AND MARLBOROUGH.

Lord Bolingbroke discovered a foible of the great Duke of Marlborough, that he delighted in tying Miss Jennings's garters. When he repeated the story, he used to add, “What is known to women is known to the world.”

XCI. PORTRAITS OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

The false portraits of Mary Queen of Scots are infinite—but there are many genuine, as may be expected of a woman who was Queen of France, Dowager of France, Queen of Scotland. I have a drawing by Vertue, from a genuine portrait unengraved. That artist was a papist and a Jacobite, and idolised Mary. At Lord Carleton’s desire, and being paid by him, Vertue engraved a pretended Mary, in that nobleman’s possession, but loudly declared his disbelief. Yet has this portrait been copied in Freron’s curious *Histoire de Marie Stuart*, Londres (Paris), 1742, 2 vols. 12mo. and in many other works;

works; while the genuine Mary by *Vertue*, with the skeleton and her age, has not been re-engraved.

The world is generally averse
To all the truth it sees or hears,
But swallows nonsense and a lie
With greediness and gluttony.

So says Hudibras, I believe; for I quote from memory.

XCII. MR. TOWNLEY'S HUDIBRAS.

Speaking of Hudibras, it was long esteemed an impossibility to give an adequate translation of that singular work, in any language; still more in French, the idiom of which is very remote from the conciseness of the original. To our astonishment, Mr. Townley, an English gentleman, has translated Hudibras into French, with the spirit and conciseness of the original.

XCIII. SQUIRRELS AND MICE—LORD PEMBROKE.

Regularly after breakfast, in the summer season, at least, Mr. Walpole used to mix

bread and milk in a large basin, and throw it out at the window of the sitting-room, for the squirrels; who, soon after, came down, from the high trees, to enjoy their allowance. This instance of tameness and confidence, led to one yet more remarkable, related by Mr. Walpole.

When I visited the old Earl of Pembroke, at Wilton, he would always, before dinner, cut a slice of bread into small dice, and spread them on the chimney-piece of the dining-room. I was at first surprised at this ceremony, till I saw a number of mice creep from invisible crevices, to partake the Earl's unusual hospitality.

That nobleman had several eccentricities. He one morning took it into his head to daub with colours the cheeks and eyes of his fine statues. Transported with the novelty of his creation, he ran in quest of the ladies, to shew them this surprising improvement. Meanwhile a waggish youth, his relation, had extended the colouring to some other parts. "Walk in, ladies, it is life itself," said the old earl. His surprise, and the confusion

fusion of the women, may be easily imagined.

XCIV. BIOGRAPHIA.

I had happened to say that the Biographia Britannica was an apology for every body. This reached the ears of Dr. Kippis, who was publishing a new edition; and who retorted that the life of Sir Robert Walpole should prove that the Biographia was not an apology for every body. Soon after I was surprised with a visit from the Doctor, who came to solicit materials for my father's life. You may guess I very civilly refused.

XCI. CONNOISSEURS.

Dr. Ducarel was a poor creature. He was keeper of the library at Lambeth; and I wanted a copy of that limning there, which is prefixed to my Royal and Noble Authors. Applying to the Doctor, I found nothing but delays. I must purchase his works, and take some of his antiques at an exorbitant price, &c. Completely disgusted, I applied to the Archbishop himself, who immediately permitted a drawing to be taken.

Sir

Sir *** *** is another poor creature of a connoisseur. He is, in truth, a mere dealer in antiquities, and some of them not the most genuine.

XCVI. FONTENELLE.

Fontenelle, in his old age, was very deaf, and was always attended in company by a nephew, a talkative, vain young man. When any thing remarkable had escaped Fontenelle's auditory nerve, he used to apply to his nephew, "What was said?" This coxcomb would often answer, "Uncle, I said—" *Bah!* was the constant retort of the philosopher.

XCVII. INFIDELITY.

Fontenelle's Dialogues on the Plurality of Worlds, first rendered me an infidel. Christianity, and a plurality of worlds, are, in my opinion, irreconcileable. Indeed, one would be puzzled enough to reconcile modern discoveries on this globe alone, with any divine revelation. I never try to make converts; but expect and claim to enjoy my own opinion, and other people may enjoy theirs. It

is my Bill of Rights. If a religious system be infallibly true, and inspired by heaven itself, what human effort can injure it? Intolerance is, *ipso facto*, a proof of falsehood. Truth, far from being too delicate to be touched, is strengthened by opposition and discussion. Yet, in what country is a fair opposition to the established religion permitted? Are not fame, rewards, emoluments, wholly on the side of the priesthood? Ought they not to be open to all persuasions? One man gets an archbishopric, and ten thousand a year, for asserting a system *perhaps* false. He who could even mathematically, if possible, demonstrate its falsehood, would only run a risk of being burnt. Is this truth? Is this equality of discussion? O fye, gentlemen! first lay down your preferments, and then argue. Arguments from self-interest are of no avail with the wise. But as disinterestedness and poverty were the very foundations of your system, so self-interestedness and wealth will be its ruin.

Atheism I dislike. It is gloomy, uncomfortable; and, in my eye, unnatural and irrational.

irrational. It certainly requires more credulity to believe that there is no God, than to believe that there is. This fair creation, those magnificent heavens, the fruit of matter and chance ! O impossible !

I go to church sometimes, in order to induce my servants to go to church. I am no hypocrite. I do not go in order to persuade them to believe what I do not believe myself. A good moral sermon may instruct and benefit them. I only set them an example of listening, not of believing.

XCVIII. METHODISM.

My neighbour, Mrs. ***, is a rank methodist. She torments all the parish. She wanted me to turn away an old servant, because he had two bastards. I pity her husband. A man, occupied with India and China, to be plagued with a methodist wife ! She wants to convert him. This China, indeed, is a bad dose. Hundreds of millions who have never heard of Christ and Judea, nor of Mahomet and Arabia ! Even the *Salvator Mundi*, die to no purpose ! To save the hundredth

hundredth part of the hundredth part of a fraction of mankind ! What an insult to the faith ! We ought to have a crusade against those Chinese, and baptize them in their blood, by all means. The shocking infidels !

XIX. ARMSTRONG'S WORKS.

Dr. Armstrong's Poem on Health is very well. I was induced t'other day to glance at his own collection of his works in two small volumes. His pride is most disgusting. If you believe him, there was no judge of poetry in England — except himself. An author should either know, or suppose, that there are in this enlightened country thousands of readers, who might perhaps write as well as himself, on any topic ; but who, at any rate, may be superior judges, though they be too lazy to call their taste into active exertion. His prose is quaint and uninteresting ; often puerile.—I only remember his objection to the phrase *subject matter*, which is just. His tragedy has no incidents, and the language is all in a flutter. His *Winter*, in imitation of Shakspeare, deserves to be better known.

**C. ORIGINAL LETTER, ON IMPROVEMENTS
OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE *, &c.**

Since I received your book, Sir, I scarce ceased from reading till I had finished it; so admirable I found it, and so full of good sense, brightly delivered. Nay, I am pleased with myself too, for having formed the same opinion with you on several points, in which we do not agree with the generality of men. On some topics I confess as frankly I do not concur with you; considering how many you have touched, it would be wonderful if we agreed on all, for I should not be sincere if I said I did. There are others on which I have formed no opinion, for I should give myself an impertinent air with no truth, if I pretended to have any knowledge of many subjects, of which, young as you are, you seem to have made yourself master. Indeed I have gone deeply into nothing, and therefore shall not discuss those heads on which we differ most, as probably I should not de-

* The book alluded to was written in early youth, and has many juvenile crude ideas, long since abandoned by its author.

fend

fend my opinions well. There is but one part of your work to which I will venture any objection, though you have considered it much, and I little—very little indeed with regard to your proposal, which to me is but two days old. I mean, your plan for the improvement of our language, which I allow has some defects, and which wants correction in several particulars. The specific amendment which you propose, and to which I object, is the addition of *a's* and *i's* to our terminations. To change *s* for *a* in the plural number of our substantives and adjectives, would be so violent an alteration, that I believe neither the power of Power, nor the power of Genius, would be able to effect it. In most cases I am convinced that very strong innovations are more likely to make impression than small and almost imperceptible differences, as in Religion, Medicine, Politics, &c.; but I do not think that Language can be treated in the same manner, especially in a refined age. When a nation first emerges from barbarism, two or three masterly writers may operate wonders; and the

fewer

fewer the number of writers, as the number is small at such a period, the more absolute is their authority. But when a country has been polishing itself for two or three centuries, and when consequently authors are innumerable, the most supereminent genius (or whoever is esteemed so, though without foundation), possesses very limited empire, and is far from meeting implicit obedience. Every petty writer will contest very novel institutions; every inch of change in any language will be disputed: and the language will remain as it was, longer than the tribunal, which should dictate very heterogeneous alterations.

With regard to adding *a* or *o* to nasal consonants, consider, Sir, should the usage be adopted, what havoc would it make? All our poetry would be defective in metre, or would become at once as obsolete as Chaucer; and could we promise ourselves, that we should acquire better harmony, and more rhimes, we should have a new crop of poets to replace Milton, Dryden, Gray, and I am sorry you will not allow me to add, Pope?

You

You might enjoin our prose to be reformed, as you have done by the Spectator in your *****, but try Dryden's Ode by your new institution.

I beg your pardon for these trivial observations. I assure you I could write a letter ten times as long, if I were to specify all I like in your work. I more than like most of it; and I am charmed with your glorious love of liberty, and your other humane and noble sentiments.

* * * * *

It is as great as uncommon, and gives me as good an opinion of your heart, Sir, as your book does of your great sense. Both assure me that you will not take ill the liberty I have used in expressing my doubts on your plan for amending our language, or for any I may use in dissenting from a few other sentiments in your work; as I shall in what I think your too low opinion of some of the French writers, of your preferring Lady Mary Wortley to Madame Sevigné; and of your esteeming Mr. Hume a man of a deeper and more solid understanding than

G

Mr.

Mr. Gray. In the two last articles it is impossible to think more differently than we do. In Lady Mary's letters, which I never could read but once, I discovered no merit of any sort; yet I have seen others by her (unpublished) that have a good deal of wit; and for Mr. Hume, give me leave to say, that I think your opinion, *that he might have ruled a state*, ought to be qualified a little, as in the very next page you say—*his History is a mere apology for prerogative, and a very weak one.* If he could have ruled a state, one must presume at best that he would have been an able tyrant—and yet I should suspect that a man who sitting coolly in his chamber could forge but a weak apology for prerogative, would not have exercised it very wisely. I knew personally, and well, both Mr. Hume and Mr. Gray; and thought there was no degree of comparison between their understandings—and, in fact, Mr. Hume's writings were so superior to his conversation, that I frequently said he understood nothing till he had written upon it. What you say, Sir, of the discord in his history from his love of prerogative,

prerogative, and hatred of churchmen, flatters me much, as I have taken notice of that very unnatural discord in a piece I printed some years ago, but did not publish, and which I will shew to you when I have the pleasure of seeing you here: a satisfaction I shall be glad to taste whenever you will let me know you are at leisure after the beginning of next week. I am, Sir, with great respect and esteem, your obedient, humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

Strawberry-Hill, June 22, 1785.

CI. LORD CHESTERFIELD.

The reason why Lord Chesterfield could not succeed at court was this. After he returned from his embassy at the Hague, he chanced to engage in play at court one night, and won 1500*l.* Not choosing to carry such a sum home, at so late an hour, he went to the apartment of the Countess of Suffolk, the royal mistress, and left the money with her. The Queen's apartments had a window which looked into the stair-case leading to those

of the Countess, and she was informed of the transaction. She ruled all, and positively objected to Chesterfield ever being named.

CII. COUNTESS OF SUFFOLK.

This Countess of Suffolk had married Mr. Howard; and they were so poor, that they took a resolution of going to Hanover, before the death of Queen Ann, in order to pay their court to the future royal family. Such was their poverty, that, having invited some friends to dinner, and being disappointed of a small remittance, she was forced to sell her hair to furnish the entertainment. Long wigs were then in fashion; and her hair, being fine, long, and fair, produced twenty pounds.

Sir Robert Walpole never paid any court to Lady Suffolk; a circumstance which greatly recommended him to Queen Caroline. Upon Mr. Howard's becoming Earl of Suffolk, by his brother's death, he wished to rescue his wife, but dared not attempt it in the verge of the court. Once he formed the plan to carry her off, as she went to Hampton-

Hampton-court palace, but the Duke of Ar-gyle, and his brother, Lord Ilay, carried her out in a post-chaise, at eight o'clock in the morning.

The tory party wishing to try if Lady Suffolk had any interest, prevailed on her to request that Lord Bathurst should be made an earl. It was refused, and the party lost all hopes.

CIII. MISS BALLENDEN.

The Prince, afterwards George II. was desperately in love with Miss Ballenden, who hated him. Mrs. Howard went between them, but not succeeding, the Prince was forced to content himself with the mediatrix, who was not pretty, but very agreeable.

Miss Ballenden was exquisitely beautiful, and as great an ornament to the court of George I. as her countrywoman, Miss Stuart, had been to that of Charles II. She was the daughter of Lord Ballenden, and married Colonel Campbell, afterwards Duke of Ar-gyle.

After her marriage, her former royal lover,
G 3 . piqued

piqued by her disdain, seldom failed to step up to her at court, and say such cruel things that she would colour, and be most uneasy. Ungenerous, certainly, as he ought rather to have applauded her virtue. Henry IV. of France, you know, praised the lady who answered him, that the only path to her chamber lay through the church.

CIV. SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

On the death of George I. my father killed two horses, in carrying the tidings to his successor: and, kneeling down, asked who should compose his Majesty's speech? The King told him to go to Sir Spencer Compton. That gentleman, unused to public business, was forced to send to Sir Robert, to request his assistance in the composition. The Queen, upon this, asked the King if it were not better to employ his father's minister, who could manage his business without the help of another? My father was instantly re-appointed.

Somebody had told the Princess, afterwards Queen Caroline, that Sir Robert Wal-

pole had called her a fat bitch. It was not true. But upon settling her jointure by parliament, when she was Princess of Wales, and 50,000l. being proposed, Sir Robert moved and obtained 100,000l. The Princess, in great good-humour, sent him word that the fat bitch had forgiven him.

CV. FREDERIC PRINCE OF WALES.

It seems fatal to the House of Brunswick to display a constant succession of quarrels between father and son. George II. had quarrelled with his father. Frederic, Prince of Wales, was a worthless son. The cant of liberty, assumed by his partisans, was truly ludicrous, as much so as the Prince's pretended taste for poetry and the arts. I recollect none of his ancestors eminent in arms: and that any of the family should have a real taste for letters, or the arts, would be little short of a miracle.

CVI. CORRUPTION.

In my youth I thought of writing a satire on mankind, but now in my age I think I

should write an apology for them. Several worthy men, whom I know, fall into such unexpected situations, that to me, who know these situations, their conduct is matter of compassion, and not of blame.

Sir Robert Walpole used to say, that it was fortunate so few men could be prime ministers, as it was best that few should thoroughly know the shocking wickedness of mankind.

I never heard him say, that all men have their prices; and I believe no such expression ever came from his mouth.

CVII. MAXIM OF GOVERNMENT.

Sir Robert's grand maxim of government was *Quieta ne move*: a maxim quite opposite to those of our days.

CVIII. WALPOLE AND MASON.

I shall tell you a great secret, the cause of my late difference with Mr. Mason [1785]. Lord H. Mason, and I, used often to meet together, as we cordially agreed in our sentiments of the public measures pursued during

during this reign. But when the India bill of Fox came to be agitated, Mason took a decided part against it; nay, wrote to me that, upon this occasion, every one ought to assist the King; and warmly recommended it to me to use my influence in that cause.

You may imagine I was a little surprised at this new style of my old friend, and the impertinence of giving his advice unasked. I returned a light, ironical answer. As Mason had, in a sermon preached before the Archbishop of York, publicly declared that he would not accept of a bishopric, if offered to him, I jeeringly told him that I supposed his antipathy to a bishopric had subsided. He being also the first promoter of the York associations (which I never approved), I added, that I supposed he intended to use that fool W*** as a tool of popularity. For W*** is so stupid that he cannot even write English; and the first York association paper, which is written by W***, is neither sense nor grammar.

To return to Lord H. He was so obnoxious to the court that, when his mother
lately

lately died, the Queen did not send a message to his Countess, to say that she would call on her; though this be always done in etiquette to a countess, and as constantly refused. In consequence Lord and Lady H. never went near the court. But when Fox's India bill came to the House of Lords, Lord H. probably by Mason's suggestions, remained to the very last of the question, and much distinguished himself against it. The consequence was, that, a few days after, Lord H. called on me, to say that the King had sent him a message, requesting his acceptance of the embassy to Spain: and he concluded with begging my advice on the occasion. I told him at once that, since the King had sent such a message, I thought it was in fact begging pardon: “and, my Lord, I think you must go to court, and return thanks for the offer, *as you do not accept it.*” But lo and behold! in a day or two Lady H. was made lady of the bedchamber to the Queen; and Lord H. was constantly dangling in the drawing-room.

Soon after Mason, in another letter, asked
me

me what I thought of Lord H.'s becoming such a courtier, &c. I was really shocked to see a man, who had professed so much, treat such a matter so lightly ; and returned a pretty severe answer. Among other matters, I said ironically, that, since Lord H. had given his cap-and-dagger ring to little master, he (Mason) need no longer wonder at my love for my bust of Caligula. For Lord H. used formerly always to wear a seal-ring, with the cap of liberty between two daggers, when he went to court : but he gave it to a little boy upon his change. And I, though a warm friend of republicanism *, have a small bust of Caligula in bronze, much admired for its fine workmanship.

The consequence of these differences has been, that we call on each other, but are on the coldest terms.

I ought to have mentioned that Mr. Mason, in his latter epistle to me, condoled with me on the death of my brother, by which I lost 1400l. a year. In my answer I told him

* Such were Mr. Walpole's precise words in 1785 !—
Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis,

there

there was no room for condolence in the affair, my brother having attained the age of seventy-seven; and I myself being an old man of sixty-eight, so that it was time for the old child to give over buying of baubles. I added, that Mr. Mason well knew that the place had been twice offered to me for my own life, but I had refused, and left it on the old footing of my brother's.

Mason too has turned a kind of a courtier, though he was formerly so noted, that, being one of the King's chaplains, and it being his turn to preach before the royal family, the Queen ordered another to perform the office. But when this substitute began to read prayers, Mason also began the same service. He did not say whether he proceeded; but this I had from his own mouth; and as it happened in the chapel at St. James's, it is surprising the town did not know it. Mason in consequence resigned the chaplainship.

Mason has six or eight hundred a year, arising from a living to which he was presented by the Earl of Holderness, and from his York prebend. In my last letter to him,

I asked

I asked if supernumerary church-offices were not among the articles of Mr. Pitt's reform? I do think that Mason changed his sentiments from a silly hope of seeing his favourite scheme, of parliamentary reform, prosper in Mr. Pitt's hands, but which that giddy boy afterwards so notoriously juggled. I nevertheless must regard the change as flat apostasy, for Pitt was then acting in formal opposition to the constitution of his country, being the only minister who ever withstood the House of Commons.

CIX. FOX'S INDIA BILL.

In my opinion Mr. Fox's India bill was not only innocent, but salutary. In a conversation with Fox, I observed that all the arguments brought against that bill, of its forming a new power in the constitution, &c. had been formerly urged, as appears from Burnet, against the constituting of a board of trade in William's reign: a measure which was, however, carried into effect, and has not been attended with one bad consequence.

The following I heard with my own ears
at

at a nobleman's table: After dinner I happened to outstay all the company, except two French gentlemen. One of them asked his lordship if he knew Mr. Fox? The nobleman answered—"A little, as people in the world know each other." The French gentleman then said, that he was just setting out for France, so had not time to see Mr. Fox; but he begged his lordship to tell him, that it was the universal opinion in France, of the best judges of the subject, that this bill presented the only plan which could secure India to England; and that its consequences were so apparent, that in France they were generally dreaded.

The present views of the French [1785] are evidently to divest us of India, as they have done of America. Our fleet must of course decline; and in that case France hopes to dictate to us on all occasions, though the jealousy of other powers may prevent its conquest of this country. Naval power is, in all events, the most uncertain and precarious of any, as all history conspires to evidence. Ireland, by the infamous juggling of the "Propositions,"

"positions," has lost all confidence in this country. Were our shipping and commerce to decline, all is lost, for our debts swallow our revenue.

CX. GRAY.

Gray was a deist, but a violent enemy of atheists, such as he took Voltaire and Hume to be; but, in my opinion, erroneously.

The quarrel between Gray and me arose from his being too serious a companion. I had just broke loose from the restraints of the university, with as much money as I could spend, and I was willing to indulge myself. Gray was for antiquities, &c. while I was for perpetual balls and plays. The fault was mine.

Gray was a little man, of very ungainly appearance.

CXI. CONTRADICTION.

The present ** does not keep the 30th of January, though the last did. A strange contradiction, when all is considered. But his only aim seems to be that of opposition to his grandfather, who d—d his mother for

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a b——h, when he heard that she had the evil.

CXII. A MODERN WHIG.

Lord B. a whig! His celebrated brother is indeed a warm one. But, hark in your ear, Lord B. under the mask of whiggery, is the King's correspondent for Scotch affairs! *Divide et impera* is the favourite maxim: all family and party distinctions are confounded.

Lord B. is, however, a mere changeling. I am plagued with his correspondence, which is full of stuff. I say nothing of his fawning letter to Pitt, alledging his friendship with his father, and soliciting a place. Heaven defend us from such whigs! Yet he writes to me as if I did not know him.

CXIII. WHIGS AND TORIES.

We must thank the whigs for all the prosperity of our country. The tories have only thrown us into disagreeable *crises*. It is risible to hear the latter boast of the publick happiness, which is wholly the work of their antagonists. They are so absurd as to regret the national freedom, the sole source of the wealth

wealth on which they fatten. *Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes!* Had the tories succeeded at the revolution, or accession, this fair country would have been another Spain; the desolate abode of nobles and priests. What has rendered it the wonder and envy of Europe? Freedom. One would wonder that any man should conspire against the general felicity—but this infatuation arises from the *esprit du corps*, which can even produce mental blindness—can instigate its unhappy devotee to destroy the hen that lays the golden eggs.

CXIV. WILLIAM III.

William III. is now termed a scoundrel, but was not James II. a fool? The character of William is generally considered on too small a scale. To estimate it properly, we must remember that Louis XIV. had formed a vast scheme of conquest, which would have overthrown the liberties of all Europe, have subjected even us to the caprice of French priests and French harlots. The extirpation of the protestant religion, the abolition of all

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civil

civil privileges, would have been the infallible consequence. I speak of this scheme not as a partisan, but from the most extensive reading and information on the topic. I say that William III. was the first, if not sole cause of the complete ruin of this plan of tyranny. The English revolution was but a secondary object, the throne a mere step towards the altar of European liberty. William had recourse to all parties merely to serve this great end, for which he often exposed his own life in the field, and was devoured by constant cares in the cabinet.

CXV. REPUBLICS.

Though I admire republican principles in theory, yet I am afraid the practice may be too perfect for human nature. We tried a republic last century, and it failed. Let our enemies try next. I hate political experiments.

CXVI. COMMENTARIES OF AGRIPPINA.

Tacitus mentions the Commentaries of Agrippina, mother of Nero. I wish we had more

more extracts from a work by so singular an author. I should suppose it was decent, and attempted to palliate her crimes. Yet I should like to have a copy, bound up with Arian's life of Tilliborus the robber, quoted, if I remember right, by Lucian.

CXVII. CREDIT.

I have no credit any where. How should I? I have never stooped to the means of acquiring it.

CXVIII. COWLEY'S MISTRESSES.

Cowley's catalogue of mistresses seems to be founded on a poem in the *Authologia Italorum*. [p. 104.]

CXIX. JEST-BOOK BY TACITUS.

Tacitus is said to have made a collection of jests. I doubt not but they were acute ones.

CXX. DISSENTING PORTRAITS.

What special vanity can overwhelm us with so many portraits of dissenting teachers? I must close my collection. I am sick of such

H 2 trumpery.

trumpery. They remind me of a visionary who flourished in the last century. He was at the expence of having a plate engraved, in which he was represented kneeling before a crucifix, with a label from his mouth, “ Lord Jesus, do you love me ?” From that of Jesus proceeded another label, “ Yes, most illustrious, most excellent, and most learned Sigerus, crowned poet of his Imperial Majesty, and most worthy rector of the university of Wittenburg, yes, I love you.”

CXXI. CONTEMPORARY JUDGMENTS.

Contemporaries are tolerable judges of temporary merit, but often most erroneous in their estimate of lasting fame. Burnet, you know, speaks of “ our Prior ;” and Whitlocke of “ one Milton, a blind man.” Burnet and Whitlocke were men of reputation themselves. But what say you of Heath, the obscure chronicler of the civil wars ? He says “ one Milton, since stricken with blindness,” wrote against Salmasius ; and composed “ an impudent and blasphemous book, called “ Iconoclastes.”

CXXII. FAMILY OF COURTENAY.

Gibbon's account of the Courtenay family is in his usual masterly style. Look into Misson's Travels for a curious epitaph on the last lord, who died at Padua. I need not remind you, that he was honoured in the affections of Mary and Elizabeth.

Anglia quem genuit, fueratque habitura Patronum,
 Cortoneum celsa hæc continet aīcā Ducem,
 Credita causa necis Regni affectata cupido,
 Reginæ optatum tunc quoque connubium.
 Cui regni Proceres non consensere, Philippo
 Reginam Regi jungere posse rati.
 Europam unde fuit Juveni peragrare necesse,
 Ex quo mors misero contigit ante diem.
 Anglia si plorat defuncto Principe tanto,
 Nil mirum, domino deficit illa pio.
 Sed jam Cortoneum cœlo fruiturque beatis,
 Cum doleant Angli, cum sine fine gemant.
 Cortonei probitas igitur, præstantia, nomen,
 Dum stabit Hoc templum, vivida semper erunt.
 Angliaque hinc etiam stabit, stabuntque Britanni,
 Conjugii optati fama perennis erit,
 Improba Naturæ legis Libitina rescindens,
 Ex æquo juvenes præcitatque senes *.

CXXIII.

* Thus translated:—" This high chest contains the Duke of Courtenay, born in England, of which country he had a

CXXIII. EPISTLE TO CHAMBERS.

The Compiler having learned that the celebrated epistle to Sir William Chambers was supposed to be written by Mason, very innocently expressed to Mr. Walpole his surprise that Mason, the general characteristic of whose poesy is feeble delicacy, but united with a pleasing neatness, should be capable of composing so spirited a satire. Mr. Walpole, with an arch and peculiar smile, answered, that it would be indeed surprising. An instantaneous and unaccountable impression arose that he was himself the author—but delicacy prevented the direct question. The Compiler has since heard a suspicion to the same

prospect of becoming the master. The supposed cause of his death was his ambition to seize the throne, by marrying the queen; but the peers would not consent, preferring Philip, a royal husband. Hence it became necessary for the youth to travel through Europe; and in consequence he perished by a premature death. It is not surprising that England should lament the fate of such a prince, and droop as for the death of her pious lord. But Courtenay now enjoys the happy society of Heaven, while the English lament and groan without end," &c.

effect,

effect, expressed by competent judges. There is, at any rate, reason to believe that Mr. Walpole had a share in that composition.

CXXIV. OPIUM.

I am surprised at the aversion our medical men entertain against opium. I have had a severe attack of the gout, and could not sleep. I consulted my physician : he advised me not to use opium. As soon as he was gone I sent for some. I took it *, have slept well, and am almost recovered.

CXXV. ORIGINAL LETTER.

Strawberry-Hill, July 27, 1785.

You thank me much more than the gift deserved, Sir. My editions of such pieces as I have left, are waste paper to me. I will not sell them at the ridiculously advanced prices that are given for them ; indeed only such as were published for sale, have I sold at all ; and therefore the duplicates that remain with me, are to me of no value, but when I can oblige a friend with them. Of a few of

* Five grains, if memory may be trusted.

my impressions I have no copy but my own set.; and as I could give you only an imperfect collection, the present was really only a parcel of fragments. My memory was in fault about the R and N. Authors: I thought I had given them to you; I recollect now that I only lent you my own copy; but I have others in town, and you shall have them when I go thither. For Vertue's MS. I am in no manner of haste.

* * * * *

My chief reason for calling on you twice this week was to learn what you had heard; and I shall be much obliged to you for further information, as I do not care to be too inquisitive, lest I should be suspected of knowing more of the matter.

There are many reasons, Sir, why I cannot come into your idea of printing Greek*. In the first place, I have two or three engagements for my pres; and my time of life does not allow me but to look a little way farther. In the next, I cannot now go into

* An edition of Anacreon had been recommended as a mere literary curiosity.

new expences of purchase. My fortune is very much reduced, both by my brother's death, and by the late plan of reformation. The last reason would weigh with me, had I none of the other. My admiration of the Greeks was a little like that of the mob on other points, not from sound knowledge. I never was a good Greek scholar; have long forgotten what I knew of the language; and as I never disguise my ignorance of any thing, it would look like affectation to print Greek authors. I could not bear to print them without owning that I do not understand them; and such a confession would perhaps be as much ostentation as unfounded pretensions. I must therefore stick to my simplicity, and not go out of my line. It is difficult to divest one's self of vanity, because impossible to divest one's self of self-love. If one runs from one glaring vanity, one is catched by its opposite. Modesty can be as vain-glorious on the ground, as Pride on a triumphal car. Modesty, however, is preferable; for should she contradict her professions, she still keeps her own secret, and does

does not hurt the pride of others. Adieu,
Sir. I am, very sincerely,

Your obedient, humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

CXXVI. GIBBON.

The first volume of Gibbon's History is so highly finished, that it resembles a rich piece of painting in enamel. The second and third volumes are of inferior composition. The three last seem to me in a medium, between the first volume and the two next.

CXXVII. STUPID STORIES.

A stupid story, or idea, will sometimes make one laugh more than wit. I was once removing from Berkeley-square to Strawberry-hill, and had sent off all my books, when a message unexpectedly arrived, which fixed me in town for that afternoon. What to do? I desired my man to rummage for a book, and he brought me an old Grub-street thing from the garret. The author, in sheer ignorance, not humour, discoursing of the difficulty

difficulty of some pursuit, said, that even if a man had as many lives as a cat, nay, as many lives as one Plutarch is said to have had, he could not accomplish it. This odd *quid pro quo* surprised me into vehement laughter.

Lady *** is fond of stupid stories. She repeats one of a Welch scullion wench, who, on hearing the servants speak of new moons, asked gravely what became of all the old moons.

Miss ***, with a sweet face, and innocent mouth, sings *flash-songs*. The contrast is irresistible.

CXXVIII.. WALPOLE NO AUTHOR.

I do not look upon myself as an author. I may say, without the vain affectation of modesty, that I have done nothing. My Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors, almost any bookseller could have drawn up. My chief compilation, the Anecdotes of Painting in England, is Mr. Vertue's work, not mine.

Vertue's manuscripts were in great confusion. I drew up an index, and lost it.

Another suffered the same fate. I thought I was bewitched; and even trembled for the third.

CXXIX. FOX.

What a man Fox is! After his long and exhausting speech on Hastings's trial, he was seen handing ladies into their coaches, with all the gaiety and prattle of an idle gallant.

CXXX. BOOK-MAKING.

Never was the noble art of book-making carried to such high perfection, as at present. These compilers seem to forget that people have libraries. One vamps up a new book of travels, consisting merely of disguised extracts from former publications. Another fills his pages with Greek and Latin extracts from Aristotle and Quintilian. A third, if possible, more insipid, gives us long quotations from our poets, while a reference was enough, the books being in the hands of every body. Another treats us with old French *ana* in masquerade; and, by a singular fate, derives advantage from his very blunders, which makes the things look new. Pah! I, and an amanuensis,

amanuensis, could scribble one of those books in twenty-four hours.

CXXXI. FRENCH PHILOSOPHERS.

I admire Voltaire and Helvetius. Rousseau I never could like. Take much affectation, and a little spice of frenzy, and you compose his personal character. I found the French philosophers so impudent, dogmatic, and intrusive, that I detested their conversation. Of all kinds of vice I hate reasoning vice. Unprincipled themselves, they affected to dictate morality and sentiment. The great, from vain glory and want of ideas, encouraged their presence: but they always reminded me of the sophists, hired to assist at Roman entertainments. And what reasoning ! Every Frenchman ought to be taught logic and mathematics, that his mind may acquire some solidity. Their character is so impetuous, that what with us is sensation, is with them passion. The real philosophers of antiquity were distinguished for their moderation, a radical mark of knowledge and wisdom; and they treated the popular religion with respect.

spect. Our new sect are fanatics against religion : and surely of all human characters a fanatic philosopher is the most incongruous, and of course the most truly ludicrous.

CXXXII. FACE-PAINTING.

Lady Coventry, the celebrated beauty, killed herself with painting. She bedaubed herself with white, so as to stop the perspiration. Lady Mary Wortley Montague was more prudent: she went often into the hot bath, to scrape off the paint, which was almost as thick as plaster on a wall.

CXXXIII. VOLTAIRE AND ROLT.

Voltaire sometimes fell into strange mistakes. One Rolt, an obscure author, having published a history of the war of 1741, a subject also treated by the French philosopher, Voltaire wrote to him the most fawning letters, styling him the first historian of the age !

CXXXIV. MOTHER OF VICES.

The Duke of Orleans, the Regent, had four daughters, distinguished by the names of
the

the Four Cardinal Sins. A wag wrote on their mother's tomb, *Cy gift l'Oisivité*, “Here lies Idleness,” which, you know, is termed the mother of all the vices.

CXXXV. INNOCENT XI.

The Pope, to whom James II. sent his embassy, was possessed of much shrewdness and prudence; and justly regarded the restoration of the Catholic system in England as an impossibility. Castlemain, the ambassador, was inflated with his master's infatuation, and had long requested a special audience, in order to propose decisive steps. Disgusted with the Pontiff's coolness, he at last demanded an audience of leave: and being speedily admitted, he pronounced a long harangue, rather reproaching the Pope for his indifference in so important a business. The Pope having heard him with great *sang froid*, at last answered, “Sir, the air of Italy is rather dangerous to foreign constitutions. I beg you will have a reverend care of your health, and I wish you a good journey.”

It was said on this occasion that only two things

things were necessary to secure the tranquillity of Europe; that the King of England should turn Protestant, and the Pope, Roman Catholic.

CXXXVI. PATRONAGE.

Patronage of authors is an antiquated fashion, and at present means nothing. It is still repeated by rote among a few young or ignorant writers, as an echo dies away by degrees into an unmeaning sound. The public favour is deemed a sufficient recompence: but after the cases you have mentioned I think differently. Nothing, for instance, can be more unjust than that an author, who has professedly written for the general taste, and has in consequence derived great emoluments from his works, should have a pension; while another, who has confined his toil to mathematics, or other abstruse pursuits, confessedly useful and highly meritorious, but not adapted to much sale, goes wholly unrewarded. This case evinces that a pension is a mere piece of vain-glory in the government, which desires to have it recorded that such

such and such an eminent writer was pensioned. In France things are very different. Voltaire has no pension; but many a plodding useful man has. In our national literary societies the members pay an annual sum: in France they receive an annual sum.

In all things we have the mercantile spirit of monopoly. A few fashionable writers monopolise the public favour: and merit is nothing if not introduced to notice by the fashionable cabal. Merit is useless: it is interest alone that can push a man forward. By dint of interest one of my coach-horses might become poet-laureat, and the other, physician to the household. They might easily appoint deputies, as was done in the regency business.

CXXXVII. MATHEMATICS.

The profound study of mathematics seems to injure the more general and useful mode of reasoning, that by induction. Mathematical truths being, so to speak, *palpable*, the moral feelings become less sensitive to impal-

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pable truths. As when one sense is carried to great perfection, the others are usually less acute; so mathematical reasoning seems, in some degree, to injure the other modes of ratiocination. Napier (who was not a lord, as I am admonished, since I published my Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors) wrote nonsense on the Revelations. So did Newton on the same book, and the prophecies of Daniel. Now Dr. South, you know, used to say, that the Revelations either found a man mad, or left him so. I say nothing of Newton's Chronology. He builds, I believe, upon one Chiron, without proving that Chiron, or the Argonauts, ever existed. Mythology is too profound for me. I know not if Chiron were man, or horse, or both. I only know he is no acquaintance of mine.

CXXXVIII. SACERDOS.

Mr. Gostling, a clergyman of Canterbury, was, I am told, the writer of an admirable parody on the noted grammatical line,

Bifrons, atque Cystos, Bos, Fur, Sus, atque Sacerdos.

It

It runs thus :

Bifrons ever when he preaches ;
Custos of what in his reach is,
Bos among his neighbour's wives ;
Fur in gathering of his tithes.
Sus at every parish-feast ;
On Sunday, *Sacerdos*, a priest.

CXXXIX. ARCHITECTURAL SOLECISM.

A solecism may be committed even in architecture. The ruin in Kew Gardens is built with Act-of-Parliament brick *.

CXL. FRENCH CHARACTER.

I visit Paris often, and have considerably studied the French character. In individuals it is often excellent; but taken in general it disgusts by its petulance and vanity. The French have always been dissolute in their amours; and are thus led to assail the chastity of foreign women, the most unpardonable of all affronts to fathers, brothers, husbands, and lovers. This, and their pe-

* An act passed, forty or fifty years ago, to fix the precise length, breadth, and thickness, of each brick. The old Roman bricks, &c. &c. are of a very different form.

tulant overbearing conduct, prevent their conquests from being lasting. Yes, I swear to you by the Sicilian vespers, they can never be of much duration.

CXLI. CELLINI'S BELL.

One of the pieces in my collection which I the most highly value, is the silver bell with which the popes used to curse the caterpillars; a ceremony I believe now abandoned. Lahontan, in his travels, mentions a like absurd custom in Canada, the solemn excommunication, by the bishop, of the turtle-doves, which greatly injured the plantations.

For this bell I exchanged with the Marquis of Rockingham all my Roman coins in large brass. The relievos, representing caterpillars, butterflies, and other insects, are wonderfully executed.

Cellini, the artist, was one of the most extraordinary men in an extraordinary age. His life, written by himself, is more amusing than any novel I know.

CXLII. ENVY.

Envy, though one of the worst and meanest of our passions, seems somehow natural to the human breast. This sentiment is well express'd by a French poet, in a drama on the banishment of Aristides.

Je ne le connois point ; Je l'exile à regret ;
Mais que ne jouit il de sa gloire en secret ?

CXLIII. SULLY'S MEMOIRS.

" It is history, Madam : you know how the tale goes," said Cardinal Mazarine to the Queen Dowager of France. But in no respect is history more uncertain than in the description of battles. Sully observes, that when, after the battle of Aumale, the officers were standing around the bed of Henry IV. not two of all the number could agree in their account of the engagement.

Though the original folio edition of Sully's Memoirs be very confused in the arrangement, it is worth while to turn it over for many curious particulars. The account of his embassy to James I. is particularly inter-

resting, and lays open the politics of that day with a masterly hand.

It appears, from Sully's original work, that Henry IV. intended that all Europe should be composed into fifteen dominations, so as to form one vast republic, peaceful in itself, and capable at all times of pacifying all its constituent states. This scheme was to be adjusted in such a manner, that each state would find it most for its own interest to support it on all occasions.

I have marked a passage in the first volume, p. 31, full of terrific truth. Look at it.
“ Les plus grandes, magnifques, et serieuses affaires d'Estat tirent leur origine, et leurs plus violens mouvements, des niaiseries, jaloufies, envies, et autres bizareries de la Cour; et se reglent plutost sur icelles, que sur les meditations et consultations bien digerées, ny sur les considerations d' honneur, de gloire, ny du foi.” THE MOST GRAND, MAGNIFICENT, AND SERIOUS AFFAIRS OF STATE DERIVE THEIR ORIGIN, AND THEIR MOST VIOLENT MOVEMENTS, FROM THE SILLINESS, JEALOUSIES, ENVIE, AND OTHER

OTHER WHIMS OF THE COURT; AND ARE RATHER REGULATED BY THESE, THAN BY MEDITATIONS, AND WELL-DIGESTED CONSULTATIONS, OR BY CONSIDERATIONS OF HONOUR, GLORY, OR GOOD FAITH."

CXLIV. SCEPTICISM AND CURIOSITY.

Chi non sa niente, non dubita di niente,
" He who knows nothing, doubts of nothing," says an Italian proverb. Scepticism and curiosity are the chief springs of knowledge. Without the first we might rest contented with préjudices, and false information : without the second the mind would become indifferent and torpid.

CXLV. S:R JOHN GERMAIN.

I shall tell you a very foolish but a true story. Sir John Germain, ancestor of Lady Betty Germain, was a Dutch adventurer, who came over here in the reign of Charles II. He had an intrigue with a countess, who was divorced, and married him. This man was so ignorant, that being told that Sir Matthew Decker wrote St. Matthew's gospel, he firmly

believed it. I doubted this tale very much, till I asked a lady of quality, his descendant, about it, who told me it was most true. She added, that Sir John Germain was in consequence so much persuaded of Sir Matthew's piety, that, by his will, he left two hundred pounds to Sir Matthew, to be by him distributed among the Dutch paupers in London.

When Sir John Germain was on his death-bed, his lady desired him to receive the sacrament. "Do you think," said he, "that it will do me any good?"—"Certainly," she answered. He took it: and, after half an hour, said to her, "My dear, what was that little thing you made me take? You said it would do me good; but I do not feel a bit better."

CXLVI. VIRTUOSI.

Virtuosi have been long remarked to have little conscience in their favourite pursuits. A man will steal a rarity, who would cut off his hand rather than take the money it is worth.. Yet in fact the crime is the same.

Mr. *** is a truly worthy clergyman, who

who collects coins and books. A friend of mine mentioning to him that he had several of the Strawberry-hill editions, this clergyman said, "Aye, but I can shew you what it is not in Mr. Walpole's power to give you." He then produced a list of the pictures in the Devonshire, and other two collections in London, printed at my pres^s. I was much surprised. It was, I think, about the year 1764, that, on reading the six volumes of "London and its Environs," I ordered my printer to throw off one copy for my own use. This printer was the very man who, after he had left my service, produced the noted copy of Wilkes's *Essay on Woman*. He had stolen one copy of this list; and I must blame the reverend amateur for purchasing it of him, as it was like receiving stolen goods.

CXLVII. ORIGINAL LETTER.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 17, 1785.

You are too modest, Sir, in asking my advice on a point, on which you could have no better guide than your own judgment. If I
presume

presume to give you my opinion, it is from zeal for your honour. I think it would be below you to make a regular answer to anonymous scribblers in a magazine. You had better wait to see whether any formal reply is made to your book, and whether by any avowed writer, to whom, if he writes sensibly and decently, you may condescend to make an answer.

Still, as you say you have been misquoted, I should not wish you to be quite silent, though I should like better to have you turn such enemies into ridicule. A foe who misquotes you ought to be a welcome antagonist. He is so humble as to confess, when he censures what you have *not* said, that he cannot confute what you have said—and he is so kind as to furnish you with an opportunity of proving him a liar, as you may refer to your book to detect him.

This is what I would do: I would specify in the same magazine, in which he has attacked you, your real words, and those he has imputed to you, and then appeal to the equity of the reader. You may guess that
the

the shaft comes from somebody whom you have censured, and thence you may draw a fair conclusion that you had been in the right to laugh at one, who was reduced to put his own words into your mouth, before he could find fault with them : and having so done, whatever indignation he excited in the reader must recoil on himself, as the offensive passages will come out to have been his own, not your's. You might even begin with loudly condemning the words, or thoughts, imputed to you, as if you retracted them—and then, as if you turned to your book, and found you had said no such thing there, as what you was ready to retract, the ridicule would be doubled on your adversary. Something of this kind is the most I would stoop to: but I would take the utmost care not to betray a grain of more anger than is implied in contempt and ridicule. Fools can only revenge themselves by provoking, for then they bring you to a level with themselves. The good sense of your Work will support it, and there is scarce a reason for defending it, but by keeping up a controversy, to make
it

it more noticed : for the age is so idle and indifferent, that few objects strike, unless parties are formed for and against them. I remember many years ago advising some acquaintance of mine who were engaged in the direction of the Opera, to raise a competition between two of their singers, and have papers written pro and con—for then numbers would go to clap and hiss the rivals respectively, who would not go to be pleased with the music.

Dr. Lort was chaplain to the late archbishop, Sir, but I believe is not so to the present, nor do I know whether at all connected with him. I do not even know where Dr. Lort is, having seen him but once the whole summer. I am acquainted with another person, who I believe has some interest with the present archbishop ; but I conclude that leave must be asked to consult the particular books, as probably indiscriminate access could not be granted.

I have not a single correspondent left at Paris. The Abbé Barthelemy, with whom I was very intimate, behaved most unhandsomely.

somely to me after Madame du Deffand's death; when I had acted by him in a manner that called for a very different return. He could have been the most proper person to apply to; but I cannot ask a favour of one, to whom I had done one, and who has been very ungrateful. I might have an opportunity, perhaps, e'er long, of making the inquiry you desire, though the person to whom I must apply is rather too great to employ; but if I can bring it about, I will; for I should have great pleasure to assist your pursuits, though, from my long acquaintance with the world, I am very diffident of making promises that are to be executed by others, however sincerely I am myself,

Sir, your obedient, humble servant, .

HOR. WALPOLE.

CXLVII. BOLINGBROKE'S GRATITUDE.

Bolingbroke, to shew his gratitude to my father for permitting him to return to England, endeavoured to supplant the minister by means of the royal mistresses—but George II.

was

was ruled by his queen, and not by his mistresses. Queen Caroline, indeed, deserved the favour she enjoyed. So attentive was she to her husband, that he could not walk through the gardens, without her calling for her cloke, and following him, even when she had a cold, or was otherwise indisposed.

CXLIX. SWIFT.

Swift was a good writer, but had a bad heart. Even to the last he was devoured by ambition, which he pretended to despise. Would you believe that, after finding his opposition to the ministry fruitless, and, what galled him still more, contemned, he summoned up resolution to wait on Sir Robert Walpole? Sir Robert seeing Swift look pale and ill, inquired the state of his health, with his usual old English good humour and urbanity. They were standing by a window that looked into the court-yard, where was an ancient ivy dropping towards the ground. “Sir,” said Swift, with an emphatic look, “I am like that ivy; I want support.” Sir Robert answered, “Why then, doctor, did

you attach yourself to a falling wall?" Swift took the hint, made his bow, and retired.

CL. ATTERBURY.

Atterbury was nothing more nor less than a jacobite priest. His writings were extolled by that faction, but his letter on Clarendon's History is truly excellent.

CLI. GEORGE I.

On a journey to Hanover the coach of George I. breaking down, he was obliged to take shelter in the next country-house, which belonged to a gentleman attached to the abdicated family. The King was of course shewn into the best room; where, in the most honourable place, appeared—the portrait of the Pretender. The possessor, in great confusion, was about to apologise by pleading obligations, &c. when the King stopped him, by saying, with a smile of indifference, "Upon my word it is very like the family."

CLII. WILLIAM DUKE OF CUMBERLAND.

William, Duke of Cumberland, gave promises

mises of talents that were never accomplished. One day he had given some offence to his royal mother, and was remanded to the confinement of his chamber. After what the Queen thought a sufficient duration of his punishment, she sent for him. He returned in a very sullen humour. “What have you been doing?” said the Queen. “Reading.”—“What book?”—“The New Testament.”—“Very Well. What part?”—“Where it is said, *Woman, why troublest thou me?*”

CLIII. DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

I am told that the secret letters between Queen Anne and the Duchess of Marlborough, in the first glow of their passion, are still extant in a certain house in the Green Park. They used to correspond under feigned and romantic names. When this intense friendship abated, the Duchess was certainly more in fault than the Queen. Such was the equality produced by their intimacy, that almost the sole remaining idea of superiority remained with her who had the advantage in personal

personal charms—and in this there was unfortunately no comparison. The Duchess became so presumptuous that she would give the Queen her gloves to hold, and on taking them again would affect suddenly to turn her head away, as if her royal mistress had perspired some disagreeable effluvia!

CLIV. LADY SUNDON.

Lady Sundon was bribed with a pair of diamond ear-rings, and procured the donor a good place at court. Though the matter was notoriously known, she was so imprudent as to wear them constantly in public. This being blamed in a company, Lady Wortley Montague, like Mrs. Candour, undertook Lady Sundon's *defence*. "And pray," says she, "where is the harm? I, for my part, think Lady Sundon acts wisely—for does not the bush shew where the wine is sold?"

CLV. POPE.

Pope received a thousand pounds from the Duchess of Marlborough, on condition that he would suppress the character of Atossa—yet it is printed.

K

CLVI.

CLVI. BURNET.

Bishop Burnet's absence of mind is well known. Dining with the Duchess of Marlborough, after her husband's disgrace, he compared this great general to Belisarius. "But," said the Duchess, eagerly, "how came it that such a man was so miserable, and universally deserted?"—"Oh, madam (exclaimed the *distract* prelate), he had such a brimstone of a wife!"

CLVII. ORIGINAL LETTER.*

Strawberry-hill, August 18, 1785.

I am sorry, dear Sir, that I must give you unanswerable reasons, why I cannot print the work you recommend. I have been so much solicited since I set up my press to employ it for others, that I was forced to make it a rule to listen to no such applications. I refused Lord Hardwicke to print a publication of his; Lady Mary Forbes, to print let-

* About a hundred letters of compliment or civility will be omitted. Those only are selected which contain literary facts, or uncommon thoughts.

ters of her ancestor Lord Essex; and the Countess of Aldborough, to print her father's poems, though in a piece as small as what you mention. These I recollect at once, beside others whose recommendations do not immediately occur to my memory; though I dare say they do remember them, and would resent my breaking my rule. I will only beg you not to treat me with so much ceremony, nor ever use the word *humbly* to me, who am no ways entitled to such respect. One private gentleman is not superior to another, in essentials; I fear, the virtues of an untainted young heart, are preferable to those of an old man long conversant with the world: and in soundness of understanding you *have shewn*, and *will shew*, a depth which has not fallen to the lot of

Your sincere humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. I will call on you in a few days, and say more on the particulars of your letter.

CLVIII. HEROISM OF A PEASANT.

The following generous action has always struck me extremely; there is somewhat even of sublime in it.

A great inundation having taken place in the north of Italy, owing to an excessive fall of snow in the Alps, followed by a speedy thaw, the river Adige carried off a bridge near Verona, except the middle part, on which was the house of the toll-gatherer, or porter, I forget which; and who, with his whole family, thus remained imprisoned by the waves, and in momentary danger of destruction. They were discovered from the banks, stretching forth their hands, screaming, and imploring succour, while fragments of this remaining arch were continually dropping into the water.

In this extreme danger, a nobleman, who was present, a count of Pulverini, I think, held out a purse of one hundred sequins, as a reward to any adventurer who would take a boat, and deliver this unhappy family. But the risk was so great of being borne down by the rapidity of the stream, of being dashed against

against the fragment of the bridge, or of being crushed by the falling stones, that not one, in the vast number of spectators, had courage enough to attempt such an exploit.

A peasant, passing along, was informed of the proposed reward. Immediately jumping into a boat, he, by strength of oars, gained the middle of the river, brought his boat under the pile; and the whole family safely descended, by means of a rope. “Courage!” cried he. “Now you are safe.” By a still more strenuous effort, and great strength of arm, he brought the boat and family to shore. “Brave fellow,” exclaimed the Count, handing the purse to him, “here is the promised recompence.”—“I shall never expose my life for money,” answered the peasant. “My labour is a sufficient livelihood for myself, my wife, and children. Give the purse to this poor family, which has lost all.”

CLIX. SENTIMENT.

What is called sentimental writing, though it be understood to appeal solely to the heart, may be the product of a bad one. One would

would imagine that Sterne had been a man of a very tender heart—yet I know, from indubitable authority, that his mother, who kept a school, having run in debt, on account of an extravagant daughter, would have rotted in jail, if the parents of her scholars had not raised a subscription for her. Her son had too much sentiment to have any feeling. A dead ass was more important to him than a living mother.

CLX. VERTOT.

In writing the History of the Knights of Malta, Vertot had sent to Italy for original materials, concerning the Siege of Rhodes: but, impatient of the long delay, he completed his narrative from his own imagination. At length the packet arrived, when Vertot was sitting with a friend: he opened it, and threw it contemptuously on the sopha behind him, saying coolly, *Mon siège est fait* *.

CLXI. AKENSIDE AND ROLT.

Akenside's Pleasures of Imagination attracted much notice on the first appearance,

* My siege is made.

from

from the elegance of its language, and the warm colouring of the descriptions. But the Platonic fanaticism of the foundation injured the general beauty of the edifice. Plato is indeed the philosopher of imagination—but is not this saying that he is no philosopher at all? I have been told that Rolt, who afterwards wrote many books, was in Dublin when that poem appeared, and actually passed a whole year there, very comfortably, by passing for the author.

CLXII. MONTESQUIEU.

Madame de Deffant said of Montesquieu's celebrated work, that it was *d'esprit sur les loix* *.

CLXIII. JENKINS.

Jenkins, who was used as a tool by the opposition to inflame the nation into the Spanish war, by telling that the Spaniards had cut off his ears, was found possessed of both when he died.

* Wit upon laws.

CLXIV.

CLXIV. CHEVALIER RAMSAY.

The Travels of Cyrus had their vogue, though a feeble imitation of Telemaque ; and nothing can be more insipid or foreign to such a book, than the distilled nonsense concerning the trinity. The author, Chevalier Ramsay, was the son of a man who had fought against the royal forces at the battle of Bothwell bridge, as I think it is called, and who was a violent enthusiast. When a tutor was wanted for the young Pretender, Ramsay was recommended by Fenelon. He had afterwards a place given him by the French court worth 400l. a year ; and was made a knight of St. Louis.

Before the latter honour could be conferred, it was necessary that he should produce proofs that his ancestors had been gentlemen. The best way he thought was, to claim a descent from some noble family in Scotland ; and he applied to one of his own name, but met with a stern repulse. Lord Mar called on him, while he was sitting much

much mortified, with the answer to his letter in his hand; and learning the cause of his vexation, increased it by reproaching him for his meanness, in applying to a house of such opposite political sentiments. The Earl then took a pen, and wrote, "I do hereby acknowledge Mr. Ramsay to be descended of my family. Mar." His vanity was the more gratified by this sudden transition from extreme mortification; and he was immediately admitted upon this unexpected certificate.

CLXV. MARRIAGE EXTRAORDINARY.

It is singular that the descendants of Charles I. and Cromwell, intermarried, in the fourth degree.

CLXVI. HURD.

I look upon Bishop Hurd as one of those superficial authors, whose works are wonderfully adapted to the public taste.

CLXVII. PASSENGERS IN LANDSCAPE.

Once walking in his grounds, the good effect of the passengers, on a foot path beyond, was observed, as figures in the landscape. Mr. Walpole answered, “ True. I have no objection to passengers, provided they pass.”

CLXVIII. STRANGE TALE.

Lord *** being out of town, his house was left in charge of a female servant. The plate was lodged at his banker’s. A letter came to say that his lordship would be in town on such a day, and desiring that the plate might be got ready the evening before. The servant took the letter to my lord’s brother, who said there was no doubt of the hand-writing. The banker expressed the same certainty, and delivered the plate.

The servant being apprehensive of thieves, spoke to their butcher, who lent her a stout dog, which was shut up in the room with the plate. Next morning a man was found dead

in the room, his throat being torn out by the dog ; and upon examination it proved to be my lord's brother. The matter was carefully hushed, and a report spread that he was gone abroad.

CLXIX. PENNANT.

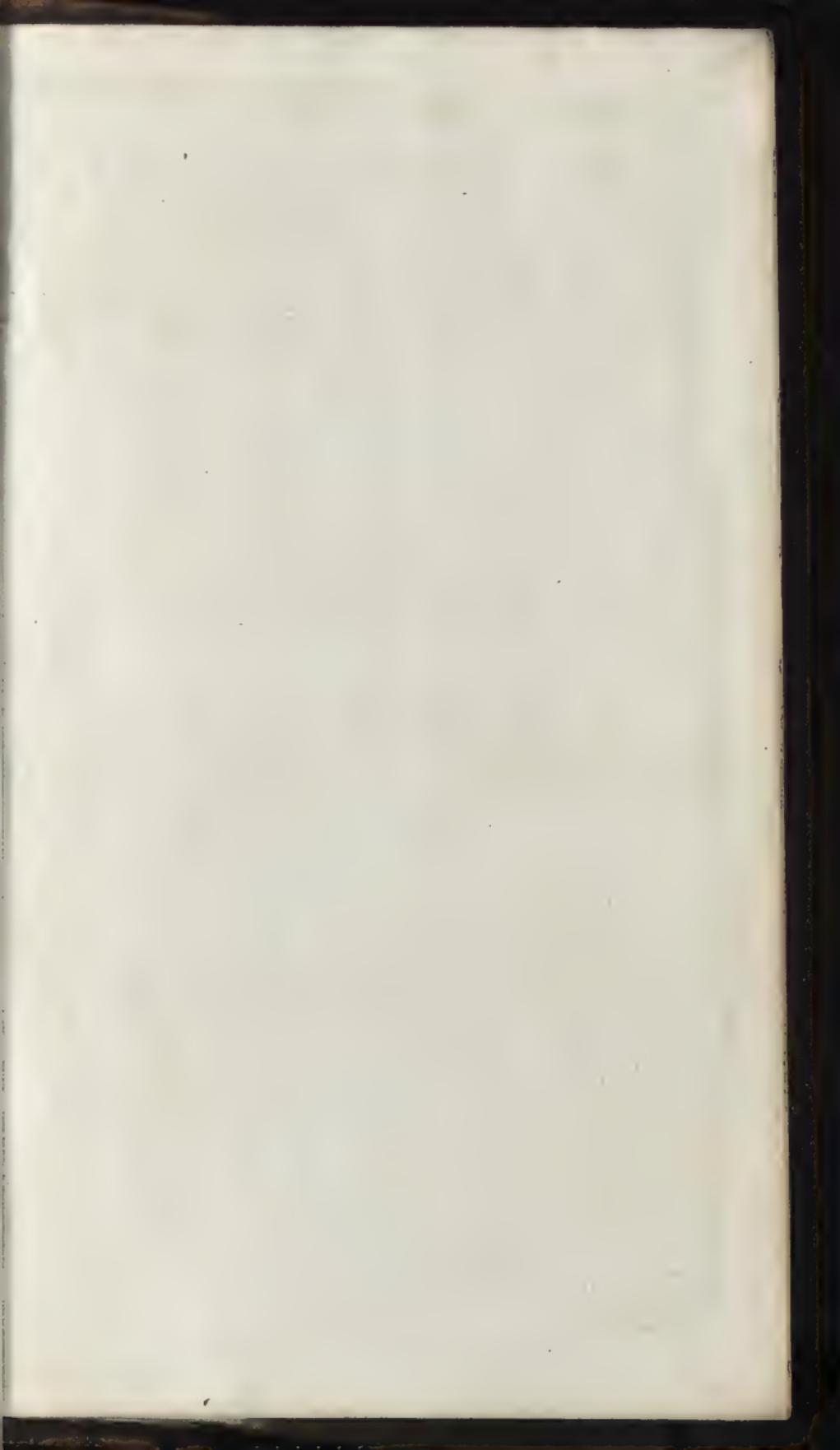
Mr. Pennant is a most ingenious and pleasing writer. His Tours display a great variety of knowledge, expressed in an engaging way. In private life I am told he has some peculiarities, and even eccentricities. Among the latter may be classed his singular antipathy to a wig—which, however, he can suppress, till reason yield a little to wine. But when this is the case, off goes the wig next to him, and into the fire !

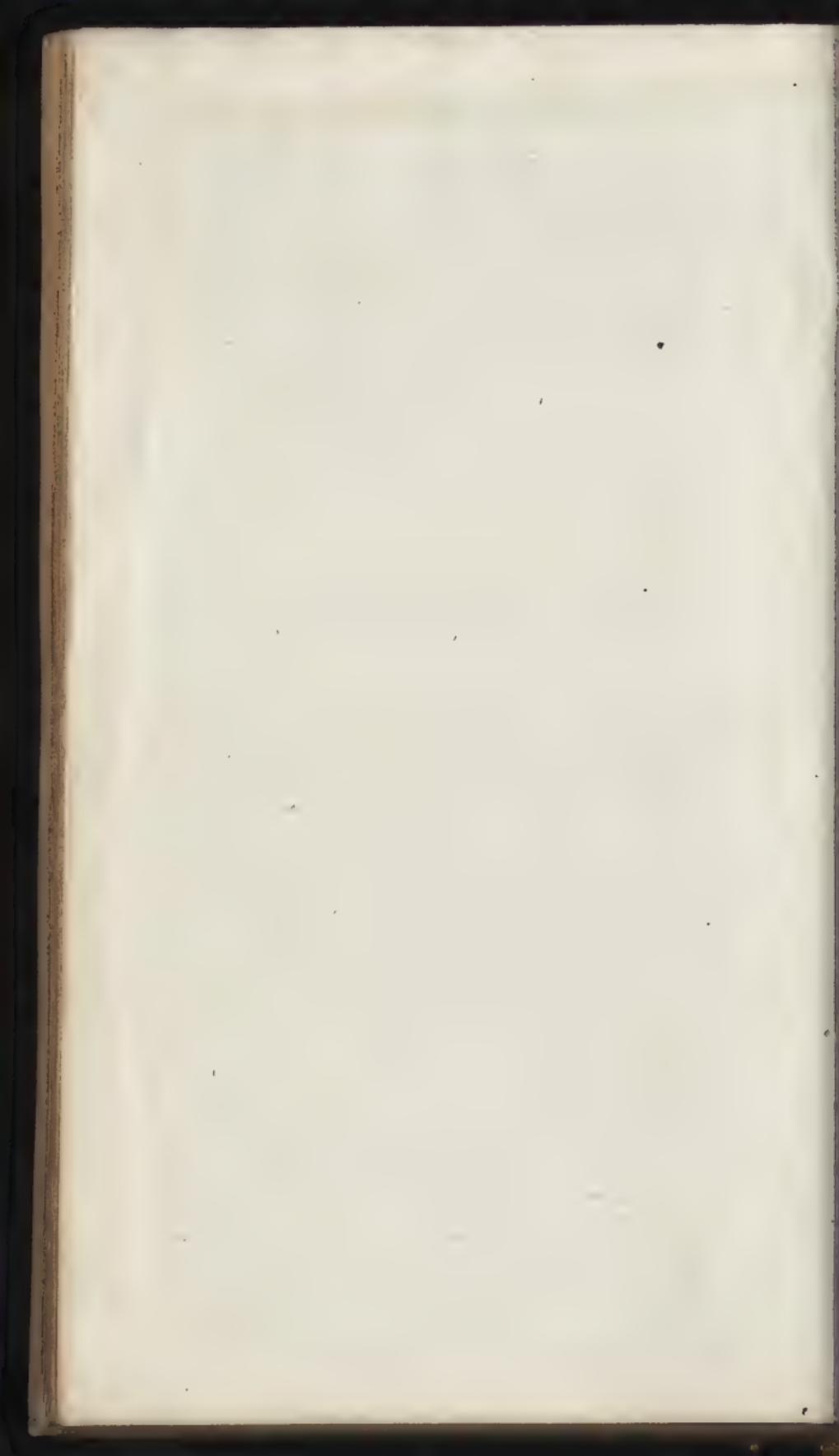
Dining once at Chester with an officer who wore a wig, Mr. Pennant became half seas over ; and another friend that was in company carefully placed himself between Pennant and wig, to prevent mischief. After much patience, and many a wistful look, Pennant started up, seized the wig, and threw it into the fire. It was in flames in a moment,

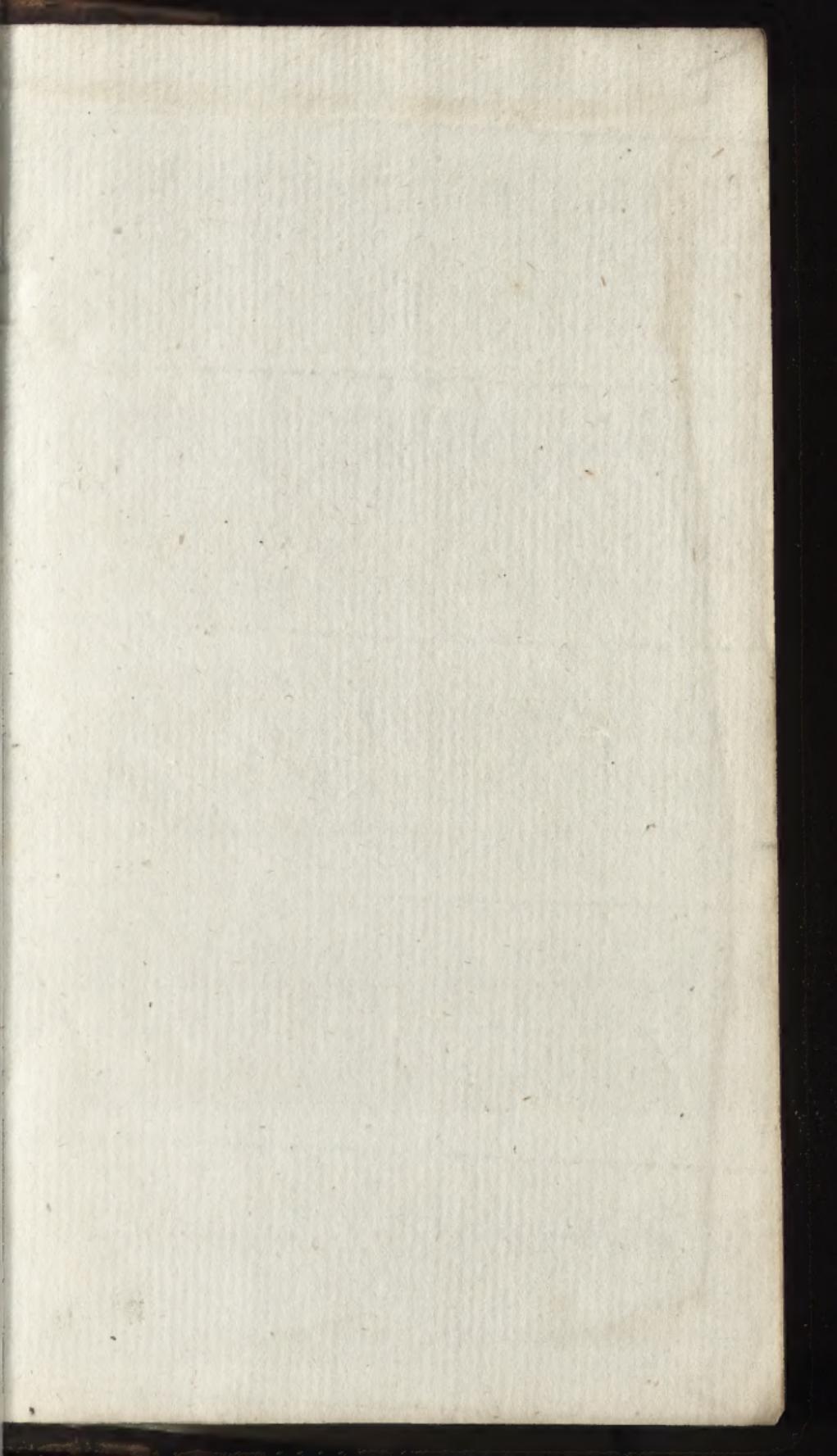
ment; and so was the officer, who ran to his sword. Down stairs runs Pennant, and the officer after him, through all the streets of Chester. But Pennant escaped, from superior local knowledge. A wag called this “Pennant’s Tour in Chester.”

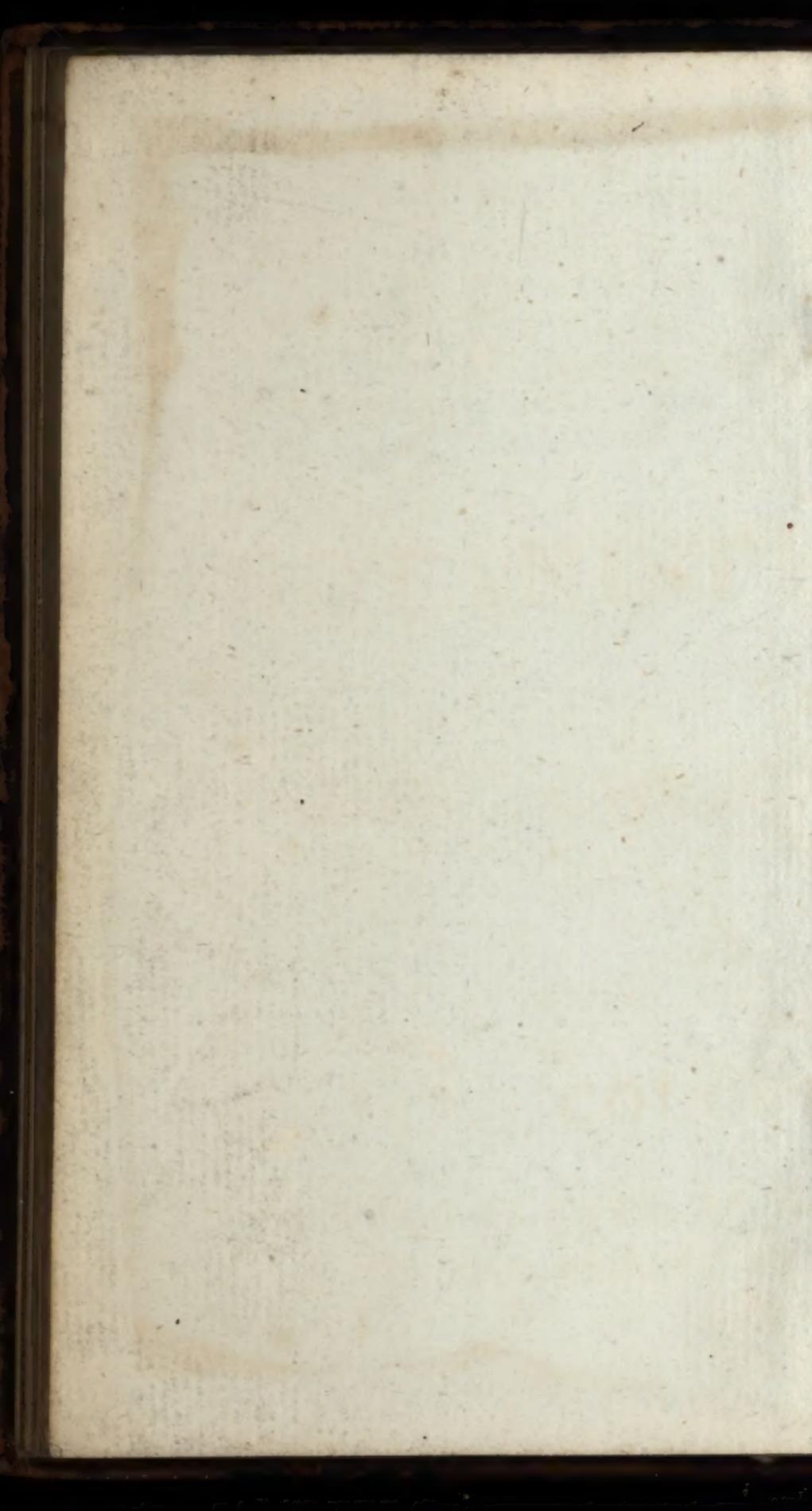
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